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- LOGAN'S RUN SOLAR VAN

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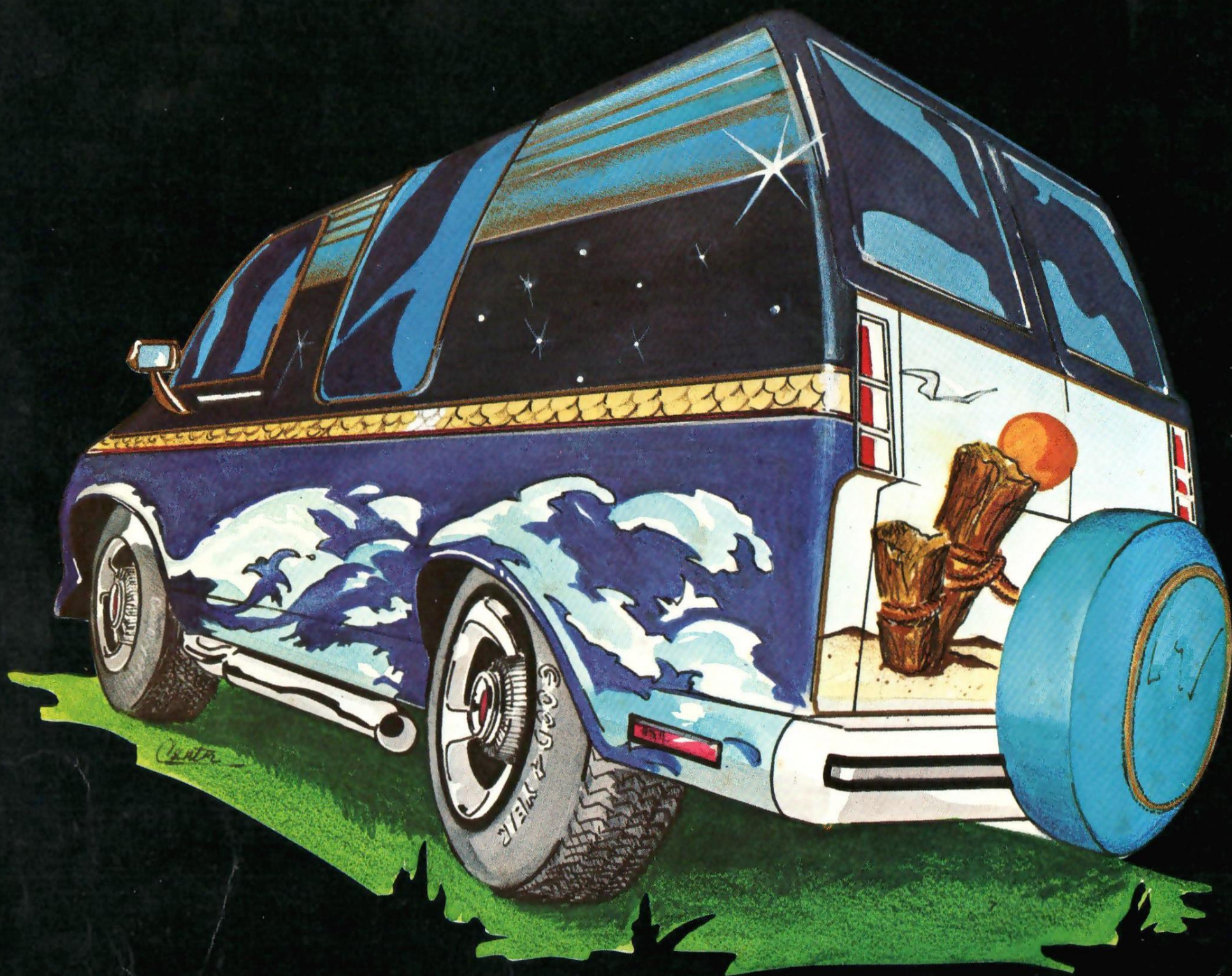


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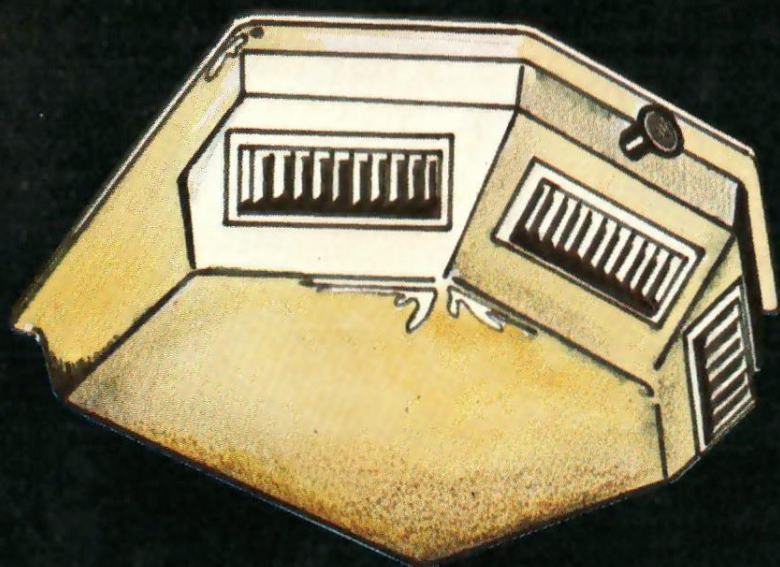


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This Month's Cover: Special effects were used to create this month's Star Wars cover. Dennis Adler and Ed Ritchie photographed the Secret City van in the studio while special effects photographer Clyde Hendricks created the Hyper-space scene from Star Wars for the background. CVM's Art Director, Tom McGlinchy and the graphics department put them together to create the van in space effect.



Custom VANS

April 1978, Volume 3, Number 4

FEATURES

- 27 **BIG WOOFER** • *Rankin Puts the Bite on Van-in / Duane Pancoast*
- 31 **VAN CAMPERS** • *Vanning With a Hitch / Duane Pancoast*
- 33 **THE ULTIMATE STAR WARS VAN** • *A Very Special Effect / Dennis Adler and Clyde Hendricks*
- 36 **A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT VAN CONVERTERS** • *The Secrets of Success / Marshall Spiegel and Dennis Adler*
- 44 **CHEVY FRONT WHEEL DRIVE MINI-VAN** • *Maybe 1980 / Terry Cook*
- 50 **THE LOUISIANA LOOK IN CUSTOMIZING** • *Swamp Runner / Robert Tureaud*
- 54 **LOGAN'S RUN SOLAR VAN** • *Spaced Out! / Dean Jeffries and Dennis Adler*
- 57 **MIDNIGHT SUN** • *At Home on the Range / Duane Pancoast*
- 66 **AQUAVAN** • *This One is All Wet! / Drew Cartwright*
- 79 **CVM's FIRST NATIONAL VANNING SURVEY** • *Just the Facts...*

D-I-Y-er's

- 19 **HOW TO BUILD A DROP CEILING** • *A New Look for the Old Headliner / Carl Caiati*
- 52 **PAINT YOUR WAGON** • *Wheel Cosmetics / Carl Caiati*
- 59 **HOW TO TROUBLESHOOT A DEAD ENGINE** • *Where to Look and What to Check / Terry Cook*
- 64 **AIRBRUSH STENCILING** • *Connect the Dots for Grownups / Byron Wels*

10-4 GOOD BUDDY

- 26 **EQUIPMENT REPORT** • *GE Model 3-5818 CB / Byron Wels*
- 62 **GETTING ON THE AIR** • *Antennas to Modulate By / Sterling Tate*

PRODUCT EVALUATIONS

- 22 **IMPROVING YOUR OVERHEAD** • *New One-Piece Console / Headliner / Staff*
- 45 **CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW** • *1978 CB and Stereo Goodies / Staff*

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 **VANDOM** • *Dennis Adler*
- 6 **COMLINE** • *Keep Those Cards and Letters Comin'*
- 8 **RATCHET JAWS** • *Byron Wels*
- 12 **CLUBS N' TRUCKIN'** • *George Kettell, Jr.*
- 16 **TRUCKIN' TRUTH** • *Terry Cook*
- 70 **VAN SHOPPIN'** • *More New Accessories!*
- 72 **AUDIO FILE** • *Sound Decisions / Byron Wels*
- 74 **VAN CAMP'N** • *Getting Ready for Summer / V. Lee Oertle*
- 76 **VANNING: THE STATE OF THE ART** • *ABS Vs. Fiberglass / Carl Caiati*
- 80 **VANMAKER** • *Driver's Be Seated / Bill Farah*
- 81 **VAN TRACKS** • *This is the place to be!*

Vandom

By Dennis Adler

THICK IN THE MIDDLE

Prior to Dean Batchelor assuming the position of Editorial Director of CUSTOM VANS Magazine, and myself as Managing Editor, CUSTOM VANS published several articles and letters regarding the NSVA (National Street Van Association) and the 2% movement.

It is obvious to those who have read this correspondence, that the two movements are in complete opposition to each other. CUSTOM VANS Magazine is dedicated to the entertainment of its readership. Our interest in the vanning movement is one of information regarding Van-ins, special events, new products and product evaluations, in addition to feature articles and how-to-do-its. It is not, however, a political forum for the NSVA or the 2% movement.

A publication geared for the enrichment of it's readers cannot take sides in an issue of this nature. It can, as we have done in the past, print letters of correspondence from both sides and both points of view,

which has been done over the past several months in CVM.

According to our sources, the majority of van-ins are not NSVA sponsored, and it appears to CVM that individual van clubs must make their own decisions whether or not to support the NSVA.

Fred Blumenthal and the NSVA have made their stand well-known, as have the van clubs who are opposed to the NSVA. Since our readership is made up of both sides, it has been the policy of this magazine in the past, and it will be so in the future, not to pass judgment or be a detractor or supporter of either movement.

It is up to the individual van clubs to make up their own minds and take a position whether to support or not support NSVA or any other national organized van council. If these organizations survive or fall by the wayside, it will not be from the editorial comment of CUSTOM VANS Magazine but, through the desires of those who participate in vanning.

There is a bumper sticker circulating around the non-NSVA van clubs which reads, "Fred is Dead". Well, at last check, Fred Blumenthal is alive and well. But, from CUSTOM VANS Magazine's standpoint, the issue is dead.

GETTING SMALL

It's the name of Steve Martin's new comedy album, but it is also the automotive trend Detroit and the big manufacturers are taking. With the promise of stricter fuel economy standards for 1980 and on, getting small seems to be the most logical answer.

However, it was once said that "nothing is new." In fact even saying that isn't new. My thoughts are drifting back, back into time when there was no need for fuel economy, no need for small vans or cars. It was around 1960, John Kennedy was new in office as President, and Ralph Nader was not yet a household word. Chevrolet introduced a small car called the Corvair and shortly after, took a big step with the introduction of a Corvair van called the Greenbrier. It had a 95-inch wheelbase and was powered by Chevy's 80 hp 145 cu. in. flat opposed engine. The Greenbrier had an air cooled engine, 2 single barrel carbs and was a trans-axle design. That would sound pretty good right now, but that was over a decade and a half ago!

Of course all good things must come to an end (sometimes before they even begin), and the Greenbrier, only 50,967 production models old, left the automotive scene in 1965, along with the rest of the Corvair line and several pages of footnotes from Ralph Nader. Of course there really was no big need for economical transportation of that type in the early to mid '60s. But like I said folks, nothing is new, and the big push for a minivan, that effervescent new idea from Detroit has been around once upon a time. We're not knocking it mind you, progress often draws on the past for ingenuity. Look at the Wright Brothers, their idea wasn't original. Leonardo Da Vinci drew an airplane when he was painting *The Last Supper*. For that matter he may have drawn the Corvair. . . .

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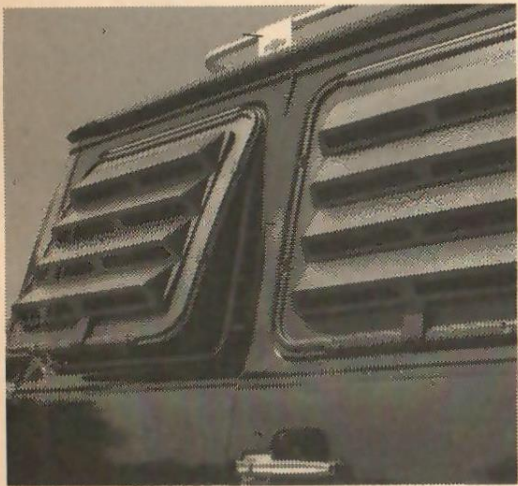
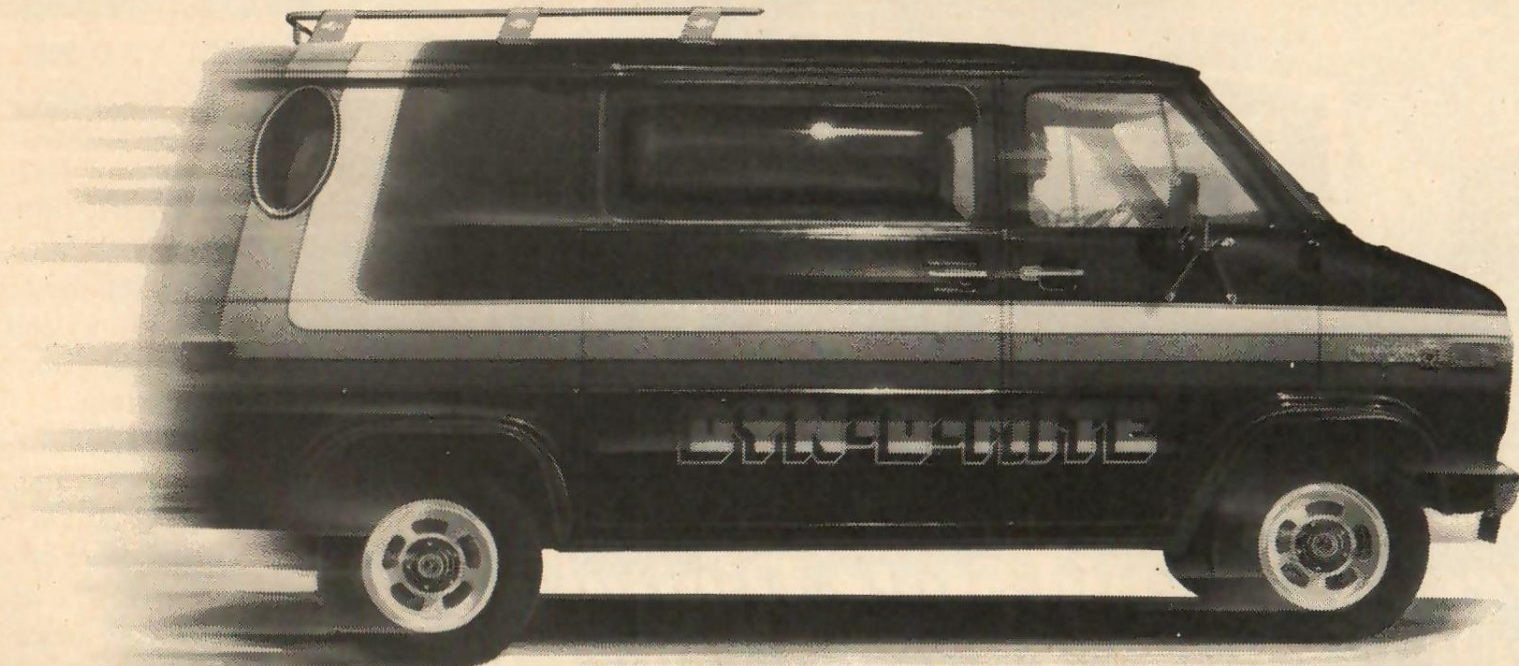
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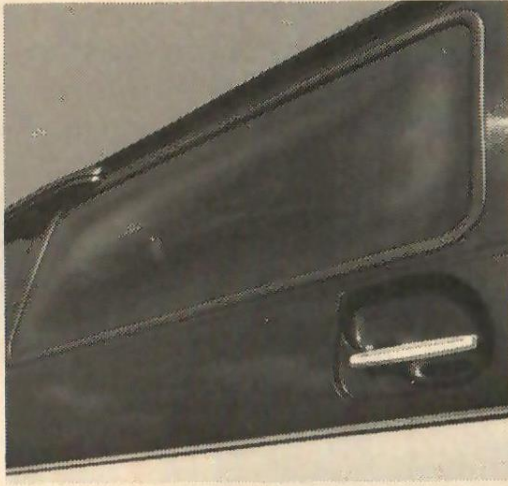
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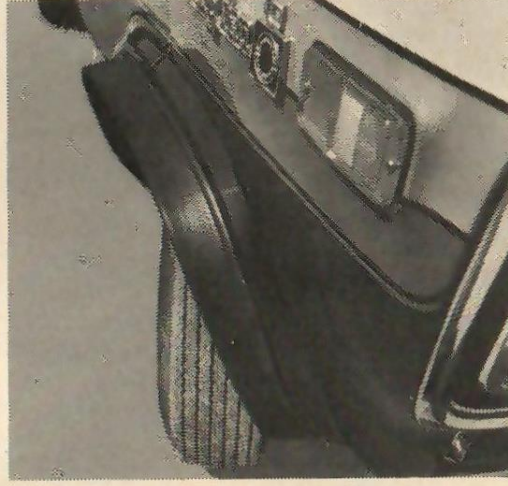
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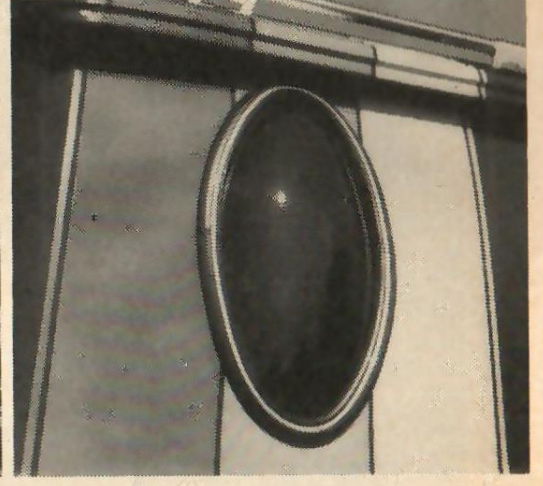
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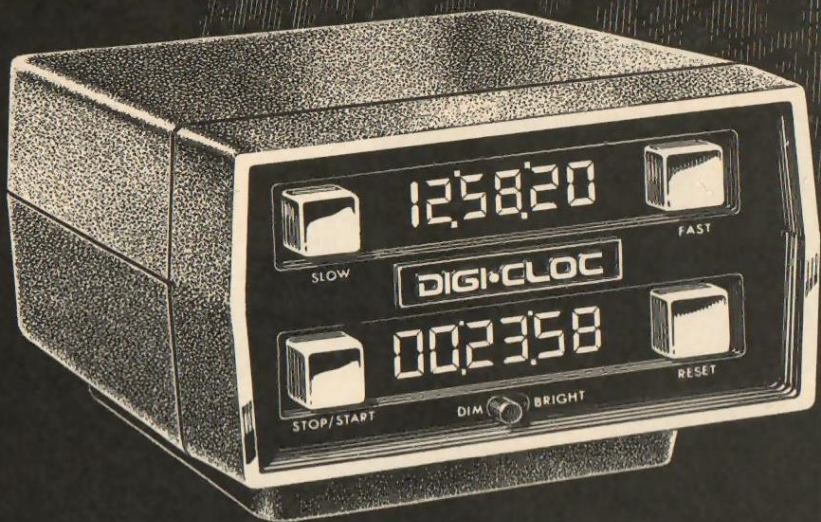
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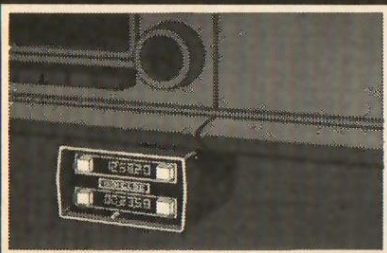
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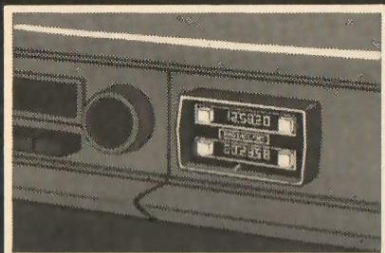
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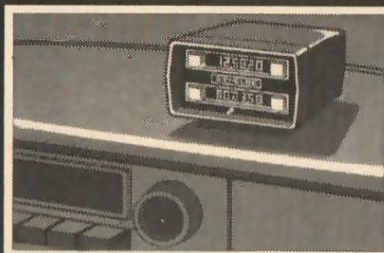
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CV-3

HIGHER AND HIGHER

I was reading the December/January issue when I noticed the van on page 24. This is the second van I've seen with the suspension apparently altered. I would like to convert a van into something of this style. Can you tell me how the suspension alteration is done and what alterations if any have to be done to the steering system and drive chain.

F.J. Demaske
Euclid, Ohio 44132

It was called jacking up the front and rear in the hot rod days, but for vans the title is classier—2x4. It gives the appearance of a 4 wheel drive van to a stock 2 wheel drive design. The way this is accomplished is by re-arching the springs (a good spring shop can do this for you) and adding longer shocks. A less costly method is the addition of air or heavy duty shocks. However, which ever idea you may use, be sure and get the front end re-aligned. Changing the height of the van puts a strain on the steering and drive line and will cause the van to handle poorly. Next month in CVM be sure and read our report on customizing and what it means to your insurance and warranty.

THANK YOU!

Gentlemen: We would like to tell you that we feel you have the best true to the word "Van" magazine in the country. Keep up the good work!

Douglas C. Bennett
Madison County Street Vans
Anderson, Indiana

FOOTNOTE

Dear Sirs: Re: Your "Winterizing Your Van" article, there is one slight update about tires I'd like to add. I do not work for any car, tire, or wheel company, but rather for an insurance company. I own a 4WD Ford Bronco. A year and a half ago I bought HR78-15 F-32 Goodyear All Winter Radials.

While waiting for my 2500 mile cycle tire rotation series, I noticed a stack of F-32's that were plainly marked HR70-15. I asked and found that the All Winter Radials are now available in 70 and 78 series. They are fabric belted with an Aramid belting and low temperature rubber for better adhesion.

Sincerely, Mike Romaniuk, Jr.
Mattapan, Massachusetts 02126 ●

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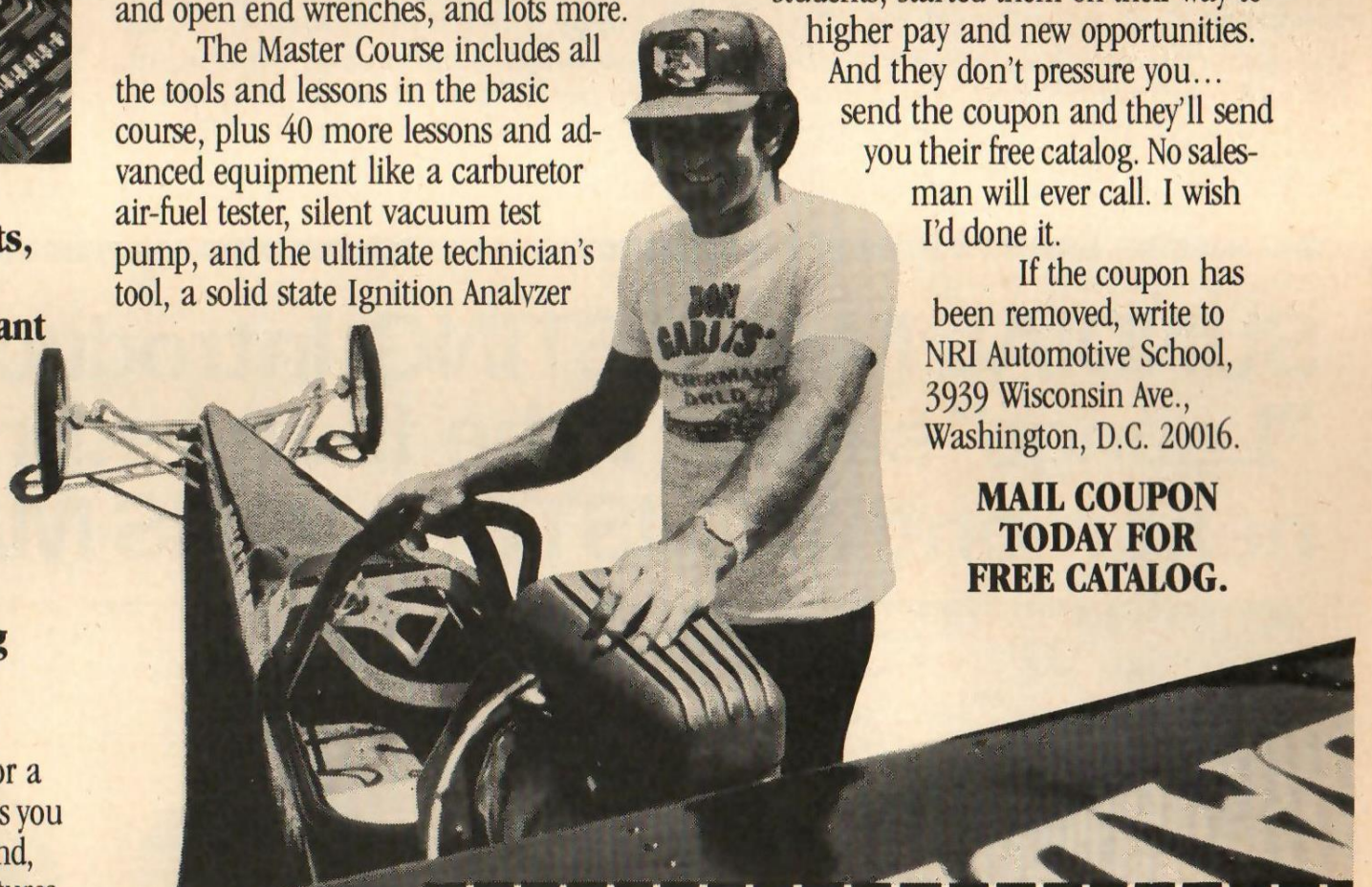
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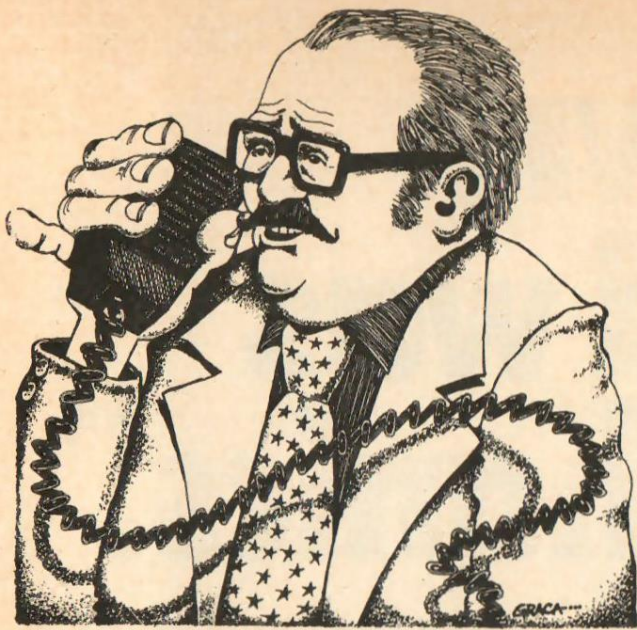
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CUSTOM VANS / 7



Ratchet Jaws

By Byron Wels

Exciting things are happening in CB! (Yawn) As of this writing, it will become illegal for anybody to sell (commercially) a 23-channel CB rig. This makes absolutely no sense to us at all. When 23-channel was in its heyday, you could still buy a two-, three-, or six-channel rig. We wonder if these are still legal for sale, or has the FCC decided that *only* 40-channel sets are legal? And you know, most people never use all 40 channels any-

way. They like to have channel nine for emergency use, and channel 19 or 15 which are the most common for highway use. Maybe they want another channel or two for local communication. Our own feeling is that you ought to be able to buy whatever you want to buy, and Government regulation of this sort simply infringes upon the right of the individual. Now we don't plan to make any sort of big thing of this, and aren't suggesting that you write to your congressman. It's just the old tempest-in-teapot all over again. But by the time you read these words, all you'll be able to purchase by way of a new CB rig, will be 40 channels, and that's that.

☆☆☆☆☆

Royce Electronics, in Kansas City, came out with a study of you, the CB consumer, and revealed some mighty-interesting facts. It seems that first-time CB purchasers know little or nothing about the subject, and depend on advice from friends and from sales people. It's the guy who's buying his second unit that wants to see a lot of equipment on the shelves that he can choose from, and seems better able to tell the salesman what he's looking for. This is eminently true. A friend of ours plunked down his money and bought a set strictly on the basis of price. He was quite happy with his purchase, for he did get a so-called "bargain." On the air, he'd tell people how little he paid, totally oblivious to how little he'd gotten! The set

he bought was really basic, and with none of the refinements.

Then we invited him into our own car (after listening to the static on his set) and demonstrated our own rig. We made it a point to turn down the RF gain, shut off the ANL and Noise Blanker, and then start the car's engine. The set sounded about the way his did. Then we cranked up the RF gain, reduced the volume control, flipped on the noise limiter and blanker, and with each move, watched his eyes open wider and wider. We made the point that his "bargain" may have cost a good deal less, but that we didn't have any of the problems that he had with noise. Now he's shopping for a new rig with all those extra features—and at a bargain price!

Another interesting aspect is that in the near future, over one hundred million people could be involved with CB. It makes us an important and potent force in the marketplace.

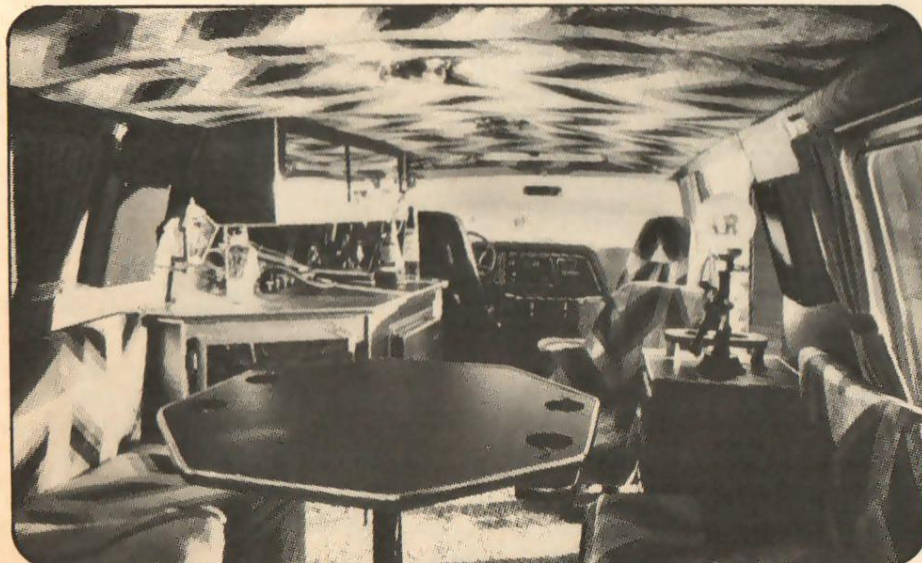
And finally, we learned from this study that most people keep a CB unit for about four years, which, it happens to be, is about the turnaround time for a car anyway. It means that when you sell your van to buy a new one, chances are that you'll sell it with the CB that's in it, and buy a new CB rig for the new van!

Thanks, Royce. Veddy interesting!

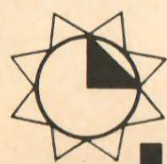
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TV interference is again rearing its ugly head, and lots of CB operators aren't

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quite sure what to do about it. The people who own the TV sets seem to be equally confused as to what must be done. Because of the limited range of CB, the chances of interference all take place among your neighbors, so to keep peace, many CB'ers that have a TVI problem impose "quiet hours" on themselves, staying off the air during TV's prime time.

The TV owners, hearing you on their sets, or seeing the picture tear up, take the attitude that it *must* be your fault! After all, the problem only happens when you are on the air! Actually, neither of these answers are practical solutions. And you know the nicest people can get violent when you appear on their sets. They irately call the FCC and actually demand that your license be revoked! They storm over in a huff (we saw a huff once, a 1943 huff in mint condition!) and rip the antenna off your van!

What can you—or should you—do? First of all, if you get a notice from the FCC, answer the notice at once. If you don't, you're going to be in big trouble and will also be presumed guilty. Then try an experiment. Turn on and operate your CB rig while somebody else observes your TV set. If you're breaking up your own set, you've got a problem. A correctable problem, but a problem nonetheless.

Begin by solving your own troubles. Put a low-pass filter on the CB rig (you can buy one cheaply enough) and a high-pass filter on the TV set. Now don't just connect this to the antenna terminals on the back of the set, but get inside and follow the wires from the antenna terminals to the tuner, and connect the filter there.

Now try again, and chances are that you'll have cleaned up the problem. Back to the complaining neighbors.

Having cleared up your own self-generated TVI problems, you may be tempted to do likewise for your friendly neighbors that are having trouble. Please limit your help to advice only. The minute you start to tinker with the neighbor's set, you're in for more big trouble. Anything that goes wrong with the set will become your fault, even if it's totally unrelated. Don't stick your neck out. You can tell Mr. Neighbor what should be done, and if he can't do it, tell him to get a technician in.

If he still has a problem, make sure he's got a decent antenna on his roof so he gets a good strong signal to the set. And if he's still out for blood—your blood—tell him to call the FCC. For some reason everybody thinks the FCC is a radio operator's worst enemy, when in truth, they can be our best friends and strongest allies, especially if we're in the right!

☆☆☆☆☆

Seems that some Smokies never learn! We keep hearing reports of the fuzz stopping vehicles with radar detectors and actually ripping them out of the car, "confiscating" the units that can cost you some pretty big bucks! What happens?

Continued on page 10

LET'S RAISE THE ROOF ON YOUR VAN!

\$695.00*
FULLY INSTALLED
WHILE YOU WAIT!

*MaxiVan—\$715.



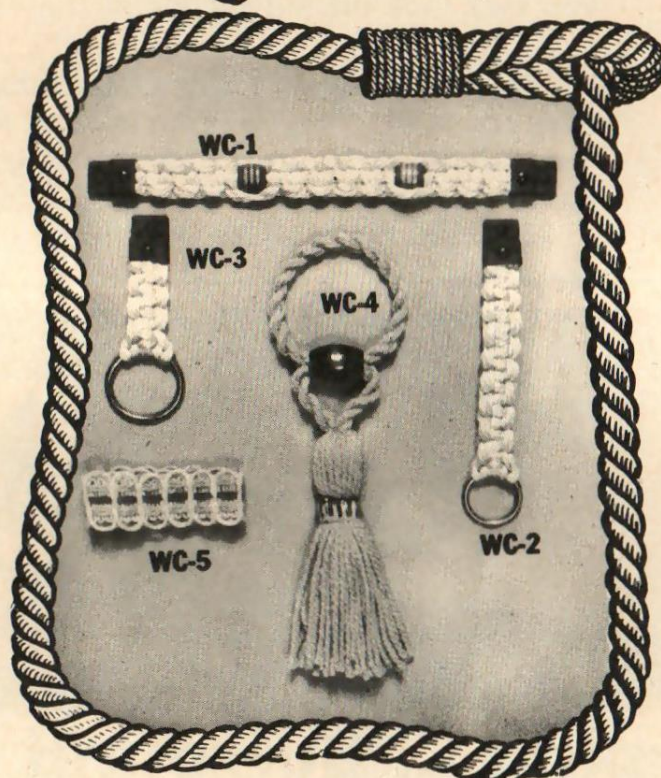
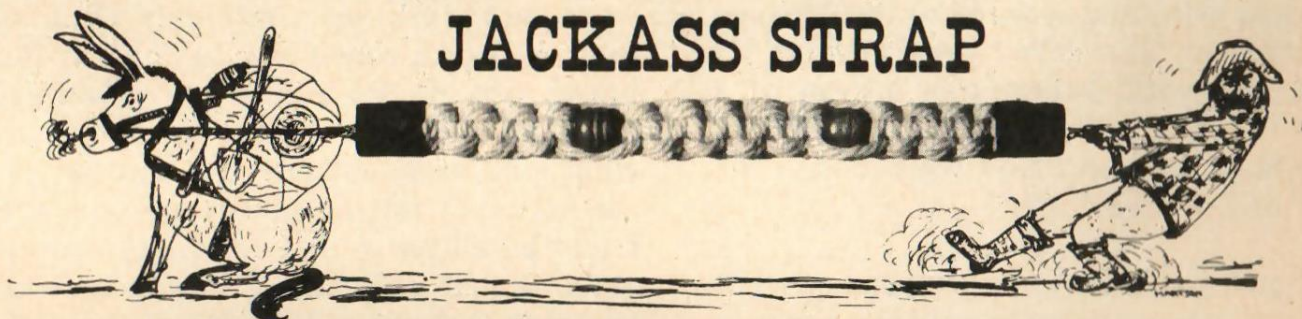
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RATCHET JAWS

Continued from page 9

The cop snags the unit, the driver snags the cop's shield number, and sooner or later the whole thing will come up in court. You get your unit back, the cop gets a slap on the wrist, and another precedent is set.

Now most of us, being peaceable, law-abiding types, don't want to tangle with the police. We'd just rather not have a hassle, so we don't use a radar detector. Others, who don't like having their rights infringed upon, use the detector with impunity, almost flaunting it!

Now the problem's solved by a damned clever device put out by Convoy Division of Interstate Electronics. The unit looks exactly like a fog lamp, mounts on your bumper pan, and is wired to the detector in the van. It's called the CON-55KXS and you won't believe that instead of a lamp inside this housing, there's a parabolic reflector! Now you can have the best of both worlds!

☆☆☆☆

Chances are that when you get a new CB rig, you'll want to use the old one either in another vehicle, or as a base station in your home 20. Unfortunately, most of the mobile rigs operate from battery voltage, and unless you want a big, fat ol' battery under the desk, hooked up to a permanent recharger, you'll have to get a power sup-

ply unit that can be plugged into your outlet and give you back 12.5 volts of DC. These are available and inexpensive, but you'll find that many manufacturers make two different models, and at first blush, they may seem to differ only in price. But if you look a little closer, you'll see that one has a lower ripple than the other, which means you pay more, but get less AC hum in your signals.

If you bought the cheapie and aren't happy (we want all our good buddies to be happy!) you can get a combination filter and voltage regulator to plug the supply into before you plug it into the wall. That's right, Cappie! The regulator plugs into the wall outlet, then the supply plugs into that, then the CB rig connects to the supply. Got it? Good!

Gonna use the one from the van and replace that with a new one? Okay. It'll work and work well, probably. But as long as you're gonna mount this on the house, why not go a little better and get out a little further? You're limited as to what kind of an antenna you can put on the van, but on the housetop, you can really go all out with a fancy, duded-up antenna that will make you wonder why you ever took the old rig out of the van.

☆☆☆☆

Hey, do me a favor, willya? Turn back to the page where this column started, and take a look at the artist's sketch of your author. See that curled-up moustache? Take an ink eraser and carefully remove

the moustache from the sketch.

I went down to Florida to get a couple of delicious stories for CVM and also to visit some very-straight family. They harped on my rag-tag moustache so much, that I went back and shaved it off. Know what? Nobody noticed. For over five years, I've suffered with that growth under my nose, trimming it, shaping it, waxing it, and I shaved it off. Oh, I've wanted to, but was afraid that it had become symbolic of the ol' Ratchet Jaw, and that without it nobody would recognize me. But I shaved it off, and nobody noticed it! You know how infuriating that can be? I have to point out to people that the moustache is gone, and the reaction is "Oh yeah! You shaved it off, huh?" "No," I tell 'em. "I just got it caught in a lawn mower."

Now my upper lip feels bare. When I blow my nose, the handkerchief slides all over my face, 'cause it can't get a grip without the 'stache. And I never realized how good unfiltered soup can taste!

Funniest thing of all, is when I try to talk into a microphone. Seems that the moustache had gotten to be like whiskers for a cat. I used to hold the mike so it just touched the hairs, but now it's harder to place.

Heck. Maybe I'll let it grow back.

☆☆☆☆

That's about 'nough of my ratchetjawing for this month. Keep an ear up for us, and if you hear us, give us a shout.

Catch you on the flip.



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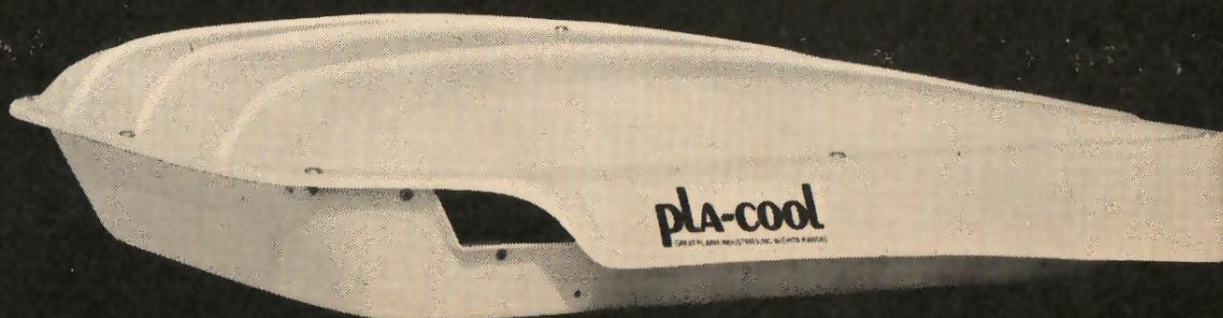
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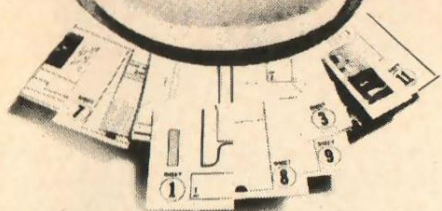
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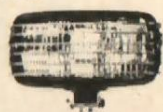
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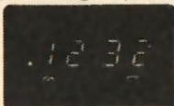


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Clubs 'N' Truckin'

By George Kettell, Jr.

This month's Clubs 'N' Truckin' is, for the most part, going into one of my favorite subjects. It has a lot to do with van clubs and their members. What I'm talking about is charity work: Whether it be buying a wheelchair, taking people on field trips or just dropping money into a bucket at the end of a weekend to help a brother who has had some hard luck with his ride that weekend, vanners have done it all.

Every day I receive letters and newsletters from clubs all across the nation doing some type of charity work. Toys for Tots is a big operation all across the country at Christmas time. Whether it be a 1000-van truck-in in California or a 100-van, one day road rally, van clubs manage to do much to put a smile on the faces of children in need.

Besides the Toys for Tots, there are other ways vanners have to make Christmas brighter for people. Last year the United Chicagoland Van Council (U.C.V.C.) worked with the Marines and the local 7-11 food stores to collect used toys during the month before Christmas. Vanners from about nine clubs traveled around and about the city gathering used toys and dropping them off at the different Marine Armories. Then the Marines cleaned and repaired the toys and passed them out all over Northern Illinois and Northern Indiana to thousands of smiling kids.

This past holiday the people of the St. Louis Truckin' Association (S.L.T.A.) worked with their area Kentucky Fried Chicken stores to collect canned goods for the Salvation Army. The club members collected the goods from 36 stores in and around St. Louis and made a very impressive haul. And this not being enough, S.L.T.A. along with one of their sponsors were able to buy a new television for Booth Memorial Hospital along with a

handful of McDonald's gift coupons to be given to the kids at the hospital during the holidays.

These unselfish acts of the members and sponsors of S.L.T.A. is one they should all be proud of. S.L.T.A. is also in the process of hosting their 6th Annual Mini Truck-in (one of vanning's oldest events). The dates for this year's event, which included a night at Six Flags over Mid-America, are May 5th to 7th. The limit is 700 vans. For more information, write to S.L.T.A., P.O. Box 28829, St. Louis, Missouri 63123.

In December the Southern California Van Council (S.C.V.C.) was able to raise an extra \$1000 for its toy drive weekend. The money came from the clubs as an extra effort after the clubs and S.C.V.C. worked the truck-in all weekend.

Children seem to be the key, but not the only ones to receive help. Here in the Midwest I've seen clubs help the blind, deaf, family centers, public T.V., and old people's summer camps.

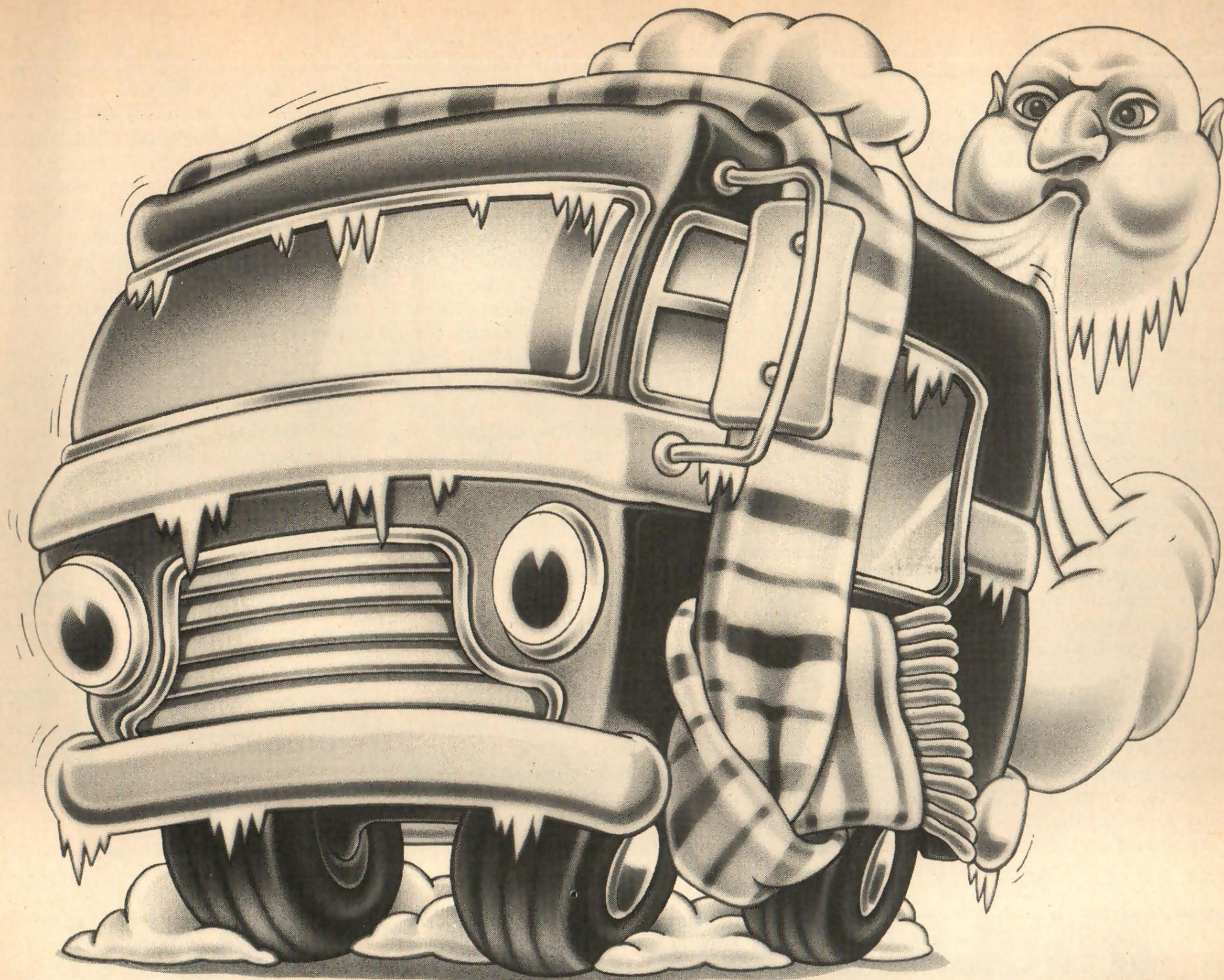
In Northern California, the West Coast Van Nat'ls, held in October, donates the profit from this popular event (now in its 6th year) to Save the Children Fund. And in Northeast Ohio, Misty Mountain Vans LTD donates money every year to the Diabetes Association of Greater Cleveland to send a child to a camp called Ho Mita Koda for diabetic children. So if your club is new and you are looking to be noticed in your area with a little effort and a popular local charity, you will make nothing but friends with a lot of gratitude. The rest of you van clubs keep up the good work and drop me a line on your accomplishments with charity work. My address is P.O. Box 412, Lansing, Illinois 60448.

I received a letter the other day from the Granite State Chariots of New Hampshire who hosted their first truck-in last September. G.S.C. should be very proud of their club as their event was voted best 3-4 day truck-in in New England by the New England Van Council—a real feat for their first try. The event hosted over 900 vans this past Labor Day, and with the help of Cheshire Coachmen, G.S.C. is going to do it again this year on Labor Day weekend. For more information, write to Granite State Chariots, P.O. Box 84, Hookset, New Hampshire 03106. This event should be quite interesting since it was rated last year's best.

I received an ice-coated letter from a Minnesota trucker. He is planning a trip to California (as soon as the ice clears up). Any club hosting an event in the California area in the spring, and wishing to help thaw out this hard core vanner, write Kris Ringgold, 3070 Rice Creek Road, New Brighton, Minnesota 55112.

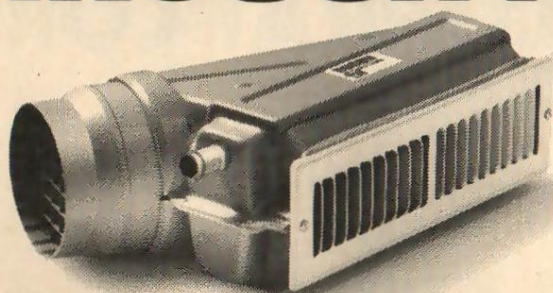
If your club is hosting an event this year, Custom Vans needs your info for their "Van Tracks" calendar of events. Either mail it to me or write to the magazine.

Continued on page 14



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CLUBS 'N' TRUCKIN'

Continued from page 12

Please include all the info and your return address. Remember, it has to be in our hands at least three months in advance to comply with our printing schedules, so mail your info out today.

From our neighbors in the Northwest, I received a newsletter from the Northwest Van Club of Portland, Oregon. The newsletter's lead story titled "One Trucker's Opinion" was written by the editor, Gail Middaugh. Gail touched home on many points concerning the success or failure of a van club:

The following opinions are not necessarily those of the Northwest Van Club, its officers, members, or the editor:

Join a van club and travel with it. I feel the van club concept is a tremendous idea since it puts people together who have similar interests. It provides a good social base and can instantly turn a wallflower into a person with a packed schedule. One should understand that a van club can provide a great deal for an individual, but, in turn, the person must add something to the club. The guy or gal who joins a club and just lets everyone else do the work has the wrong idea. When there is work to be done, the idea is to hold up your hand and say, "I'll do it." Then,

after you have accepted a responsibility, the idea is to follow through and accomplish whatever job you have volunteered to do, get it done right and get it done on time. With enough members who are active and who volunteer to get the job done, a dynamite club can evolve for winter and summer fun. All too often you hear the expression, "I just came here to party." Well, that's fine, partying is the best way to pass leisure time. Each person has his own way of partying. Relax, kick back, get loose, or let the good times roll. If that is what you are into vanning for, then enjoy—as long as you think of your fellow trucker and don't do anything to bum him out.

But here is the rub, if you just came to party, then don't open your mouth and criticize the people doing the work. If you think there is a bad treatment of a certain situation, get off your butt and go do a better job. Don't be a hypocrite. If you just came to party and there is something about the club, rally, truck-in, or van show that you don't like, either do something to remedy the situation or shut up. All too often there are a limited number of hard workers who take the responsibility and do all the work. They are generally over-worked and never get any thanks—they get the brunt of criticism when the job is all over.

Without these people nothing would ever get accomplished. And while we are

on the subject, here is a BIG FAT and sincere "THANK YOU" to all you people out there who do the work. You know who you are and you had better drink in that thanks just laid on you 'cause it might be the only one you will get this year. Without you, vanning wouldn't be. And as for all you people who just go to party: Have a drink, light a smoke, but if you wake up in the morning and it's all over, the only reason is because you were more interested in being a piece of driftwood than in doing some work to make it happen.

Anyone wishing to contact Gail or exchange newsletters can do so by writing Gail Middaugh, 7452 S.E. Webster Lane, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 97222.

Let's hear from your club, and 'til next month, Threes & Eights. ●

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Your ice chest is bulky, awkward to carry, messy and inefficient at keeping its contents cold. You have to buy ice every day, if you can find it, throw away the spoiled soggy food and drain off the water repeatedly.

Conventional portable refrigerators are either too heavy, too noisy, drain your battery too quickly or need to be kept level.

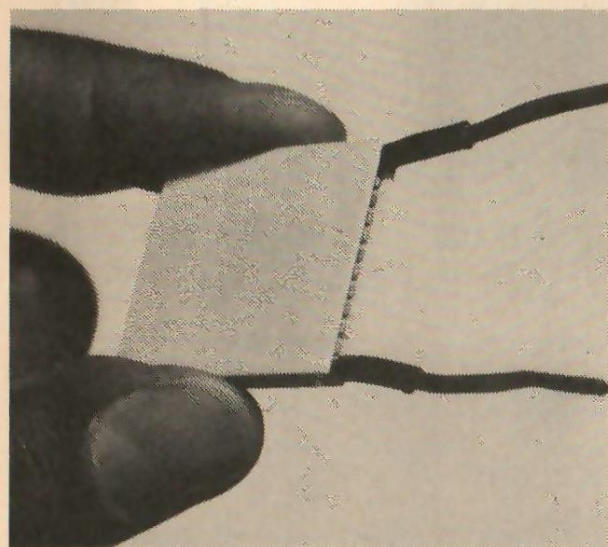
These problems and inconveniences have finally been resolved in one totally new product the Frostpak 12 volt portable electronic refrigerator. We believe the Frostpak represents such a dramatic advance in refrigeration for recreational use that all existing methods are now outmoded.

USES AEROSPACE REFRIGERATION MODULES

The Frostpak cools your food electronically with solid state thermoelectric refrigeration modules. These same powerful modules are used by military and aerospace scientists to cool critical components in rockets and satellites. They use thermoelectric cooling because of its *absolute reliability, insensitivity to motion or level*, small size & weight and minimal battery drain. Only the Frostpak has these outstanding features.

WHY IS THE FROSTPAK SO MUCH BETTER THAN AN ICE CHEST?

An ice chest maintains an *air* temperature of 50-60 deg. F. Meat and milk spoil rapidly at temperatures above 50 deg. F. which is why the top of your meat will go bad even when it is sitting on ice. The Frostpak maintains normal home refrigeration temperatures of 40-45 deg. F. even in 95 deg. F. weather. You can also keep food frozen in air temperatures up to 80 deg. F.



Two of these miniaturized thermoelectric modules replace all the bulky complex piping coils, compressors and motors in conventional portable refrigerators. The modules pump heat from your food into efficient heat sinks where it is dissipated by a quiet fan. They operate on a principle called the "Peltier Effect" - passing electricity through the junction of dissimilar metals causes heat to flow from one metal to the other.



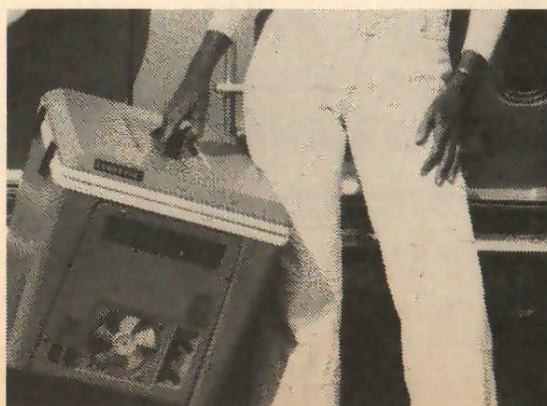
The new Frostpak keeps 40 lbs. of food at household refrigeration temperature but weighs only 15 lbs. Only 21" x 16" X 16" ext.

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AMAZING VARIETY OF USES

Fits into virtually any boat, van or camper. Carry it on the back seat during car trips. Ideal for fishing and hunting - bring your catch back home fresh (a few loads of fish fillets could pay for your Frostpak). Use it for grocery shopping, medicines, carrying film, salesmen's samples. Take it to the drive-in movies, auto races and other sporting events. With an inexpensive battery charger you can use your Frostpak as a bar fridge all winter and a patio fridge in the summer. Run it in your motel room at night and enjoy a midnight snack whenever you feel like it. We have customers using Frostpaks on construction sites, in workboats, laboratories and even in locker rooms for a "cold one" after the game. Even sailboats with no engine can enjoy refrigeration if they have dock power to recharge with.



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The Truckin' Truth

By Terry Cook

You may or may not know it, but the reason new cars have all been getting smaller is because smaller (lighter) vehicles get better fuel economy. And these days, fuel economy is the primary area of concern with the auto manufacturers since the government has imposed Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards which all import and domestic auto manufacturers must meet. The Corporate Average Fuel

Economy (CAFE) means that all the vehicles that a car maker produces must average out to a certain fuel economy number, and each year the number goes up! Thus you can see that expensive retooling is required to design new smaller cars that get better fuel economy figures.

Well, at long last the CAFE numbers for light trucks, vans and utility (four wheel drive) vehicles have been announced by the Department of Transportation, and they have the truckmakers scurrying around in a hubbub. The figures are for 1979, 1980 and 1981, and as is the case with cars, they get tougher each year. The 1979 figure for trucks and vans up to 6000 pounds was already known, with a 17.2 mpg figure for two wheel drive trucks and vans and a 15.8 figure for four wheelers.

The new standards are considerably tougher because they not only go up, but they also include the heavier 8500 GVW models which are harder to get good fuel economy from. In case anybody out there doesn't know what GVW means, it stands for Gross Vehicle Weight which is the weight of the vehicle plus the stuff it is designed to haul (such as passengers, luggage, etc.).

The new numbers from the DOT are as follows: For the 1980 model year two wheel drive trucks and vans under 8500 GVW must average 19.2 (without "captives") or 19.7 mpg (with "captives"). In case you don't know what captives are, they are imported trucks which are sold

here by American manufacturers; examples are the Chevrolet LUV pickup, the Ford Courier mini-pickup, and the imported mini-pickup which Chrysler will debut in September. The 1980 average figure for four wheel drive vehicles under 8500 GVW is 16.2 mpg (without "captives").

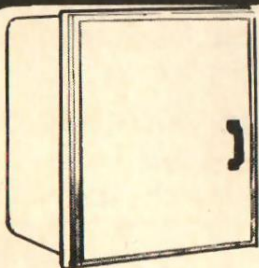
1981 two wheel drive trucks must average 20.5 mpg (without "captives") and 21.0 (with "captives"); four wheel drive vehicles in 1981 must average 17.7 mpg (without "captives"). As you can see, Detroit really has its work cut out. Unlike cars, trucks have a certain utilitarian function they must perform in that they must be able to carry certain loads for commercial applications. Thus it is not just a matter of designing a smaller truck because it still must carry the same payload. And the cost of retooling (new dies, etc.) for a new vehicle is astronomical these days.

So what does this all mean to you, the average vanner or trucker out there on the street? It means that vans as we know them will have somewhat different engines in the immediate future. Since the Oldsmobile 350 cubic inch diesel has met with warm acceptance in the Olds cars and GMC/Chevy pickups, it may very well find its way into vans in short order. The diesel is a bit noisier than gas burning engines, and does not have the power to provide peppy acceleration, but it does get better fuel economy. General Motors has

Continued on page 18

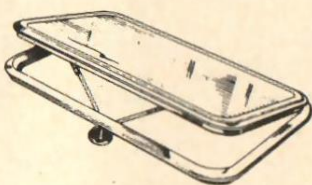
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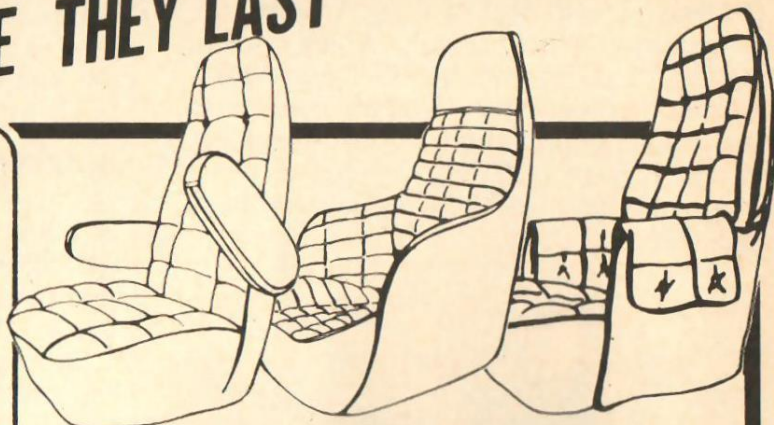
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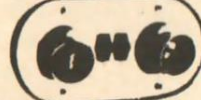
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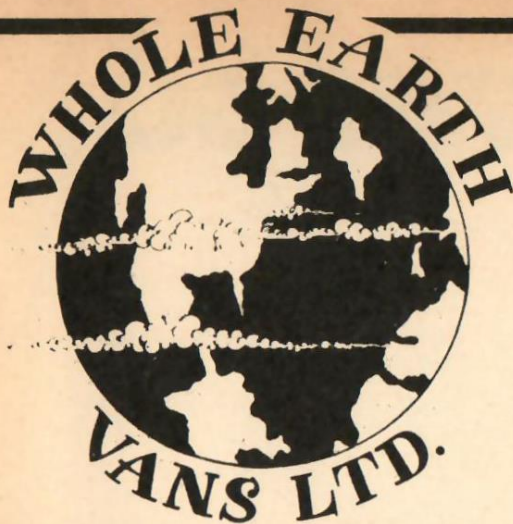


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THE TRUCKIN' TRUTH

Continued from page 16

found a 22 to 25 percent gain in fuel economy when comparable sized engine and vehicle weight diesel engine rigs were compared to gas burners. I have driven other diesel powered trucks, four wheelers and cars, and the General Motors oil burner is the least offensive of the bunch in terms of performance, noise and shake.

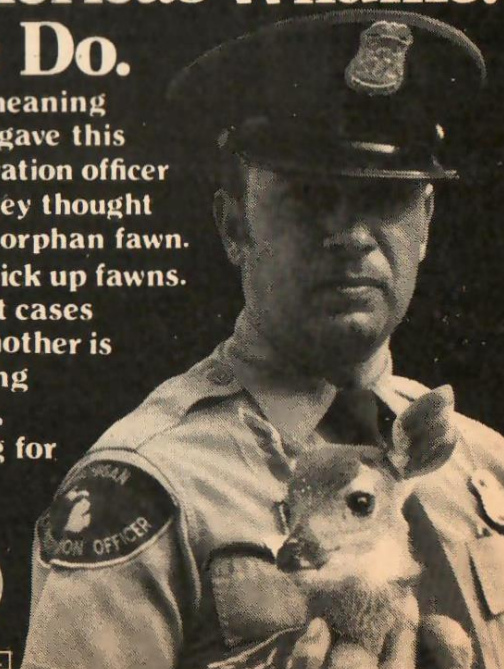
Ford Motor Company has been working in a different direction as its "three by six" engine should be surfacing soon in some light duty trucks. Essentially this is a six cylinder engine that accelerates on all six holes and then automatically switches three of the cylinders "off" when cruising to save fuel. It will be in Ford pickups and possibly in Ford vans.

Dodge has a six cylinder Mitsubishi diesel engine in its pickups this year and where Chevy/GMC only offer their diesel with automatic transmission, the Dodge Mitsubishi diesel can be bought with either manual four speed or automatic transmission. It is possible that Dodge might slip these diesel sixes into some vans in the near future to help boost their CAFE. I say possible because, as is the case with the diesel Chevy/GMC van possibility, and the "three by six" Ford Econoline, the Dodge diesel van is only speculation. We'll just have to wait to see what Detroit has in store for us. But you don't have to be Henry Ford to know that mini-vans are on Detroit drawing boards and that import mini-vans that already exist in Japan might be here soon. The important thing is that you, the van owner, will benefit in the long run as fuel economy is going to do nothing but get better in vans.

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With interior trends reaching higher levels of sophistication every day, the simple one-piece straight sheet ceiling or shag covered types are becoming things of the past. Street as well as show vans are becoming scaled down renderings of opulent interior decoration masterpieces.

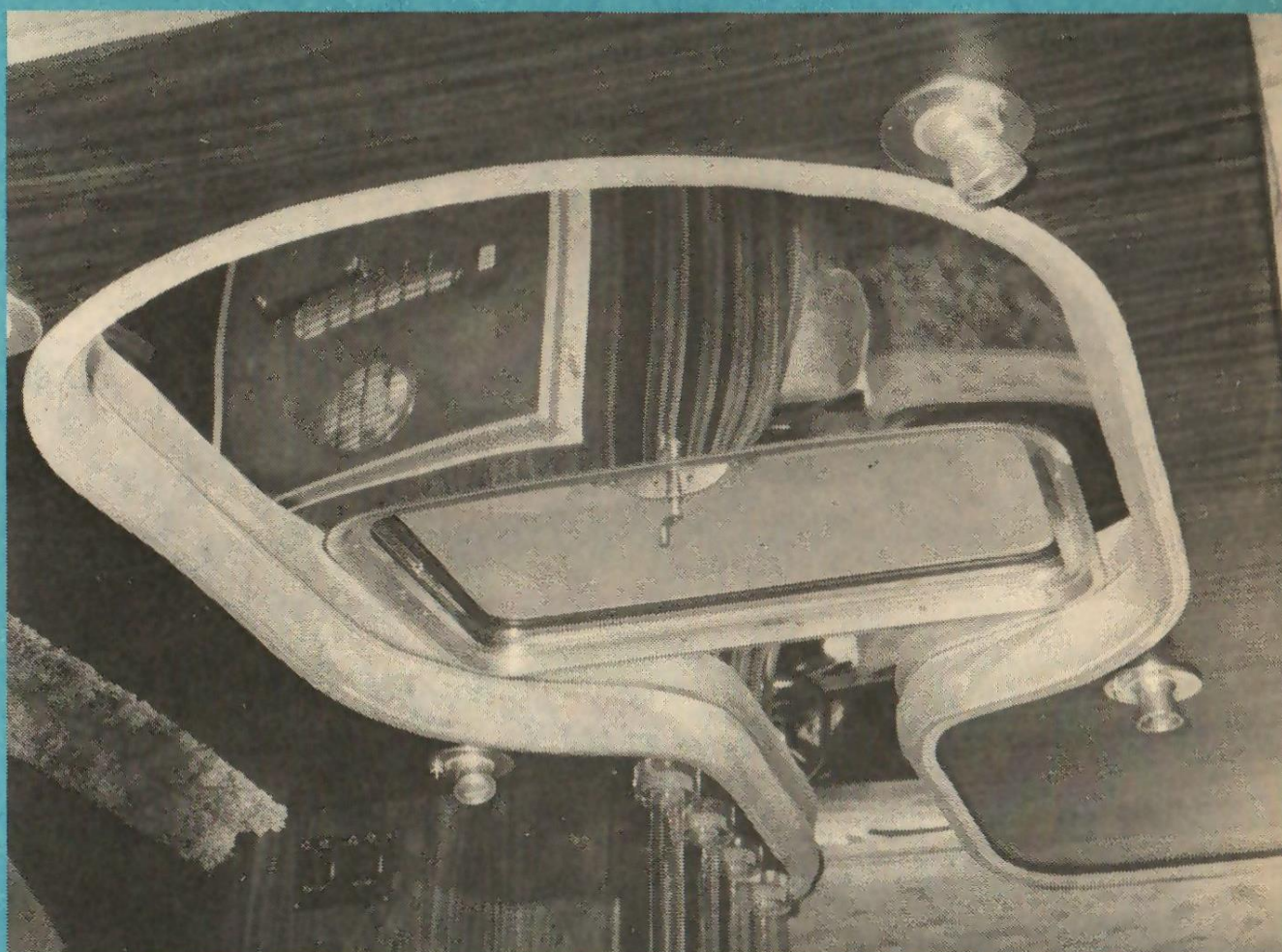
A typical example is this Panda Van interior creation, specifically designed for the *Badger Bus* featured in last month's CVM. This particular piece of overhead excellence featured a horseshoe drop panel of Brazilian Rosewood and a mirror section trimmed in blue crushed velvet. Other materials may be preferred or selected for this type of decorative addition, but for this type of ceiling installation, the fabrication procedure remains the same. Bob Leyrer, president and chief designer of Panda Vans, Pompano Beach, Florida shows in detail how it all came about.

First a piece of 4x8 is cut to conform to the ceiling which will, in turn, be fastened to the roof ribs after insulation is installed. In this case we had to consider a sunroof which would take a good portion of the inner area. With this in mind, the sunroof's opening location was arrived at by tracing through the roof opening after the sheeting was tacked in place with a few machine screws. Prior to permanent installation of the sheet, the respective sunroof opening was cut into the plywood panel. After arriving at and measuring out the horseshoe pattern on cardboard, it was traced onto a sheet of 3/8 inch plywood which would serve as the drop section of the ceiling. The inner sheet and horseshoe contour sheet were then laid aside as reinforcement, and securing ribs were installed in the ceiling against or onto the metal ribs. One by twos are then added around the perimeter of the ceiling as shown and special braces were cut to hold the drop section at the proper lowered height. With all the bracing fixtures in place, the horseshoe drop panel was secured in position with wood screws. A one by three wood brace is run across the narrow front space and the wider rear space between the sections on a temporary basis to keep the two halves in place. The thin piece of formed inner sheeting is now notched to conform to the frontal contour of the drop pieces and the inner sheeting can be secured. The sunroof flange was instrumental in holding this section down properly and securely after it was attached. Leyrer found it easier tacking the 3/8 inch plywood horseshoe segments for alignment and then removing them in order to easily mount the inner sheet

as shown. After the inner ceiling piece is permanently secured, the outer horseshoe is affixed and screwed down with self tapping sheet metal screws driven into the metal roof ribs and wood braces. An inner lip is then cut to the identical contour of the inner curve of the horseshoe, about two inches wide. As pictured in the accompanying photographs, this lip is necessary in order to secure a facing whether it be wood, carpet, material etc. In the *Badger* van we chose blue crushed velvet mounted over flexible oilboard which was run around the inner peri-

meter of the horseshoe and secured with small finishing nails which were unobtrusively pushed through the padded velvet strips. The photo of this ceiling concept in its finished state shows how effective it is. Above all, it is not difficult to build with the aid of jig saw, screwdriver, drill and flat head finishing screws. There is an unlimited choice of trim material and finishing options available.

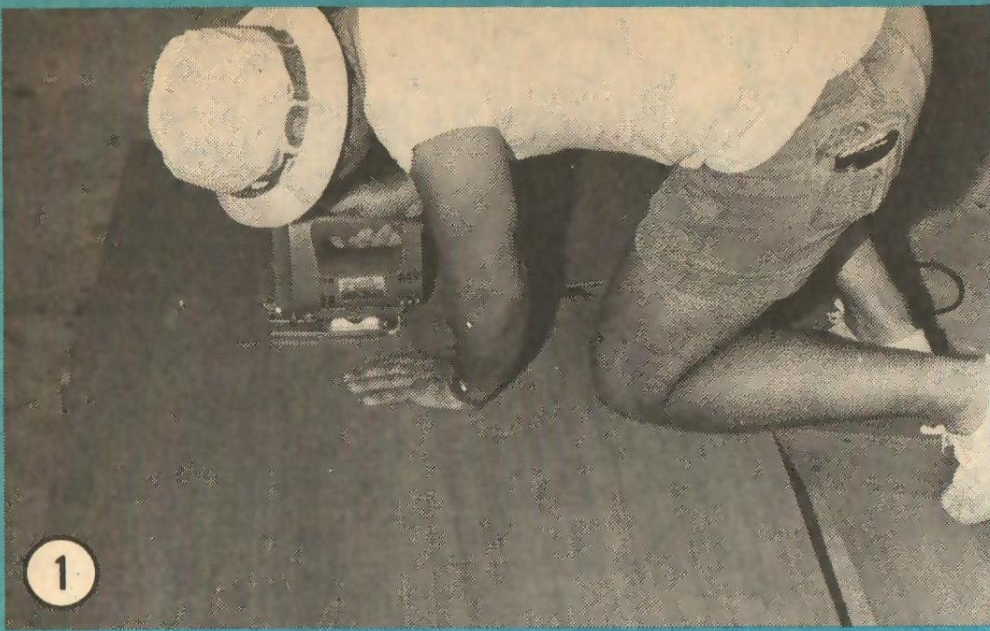
For a pure custom look, this is one sure way to gain admiration from other vanners and extra points at van shows! ●



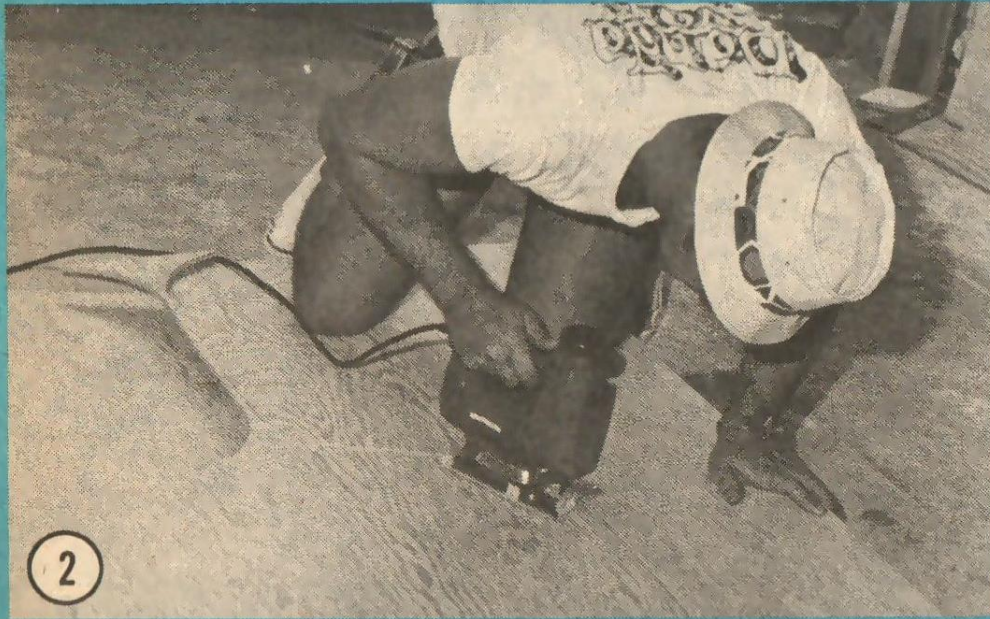
How to Build a Drop Ceiling

A Design for Custom Tailoring Your Headliner

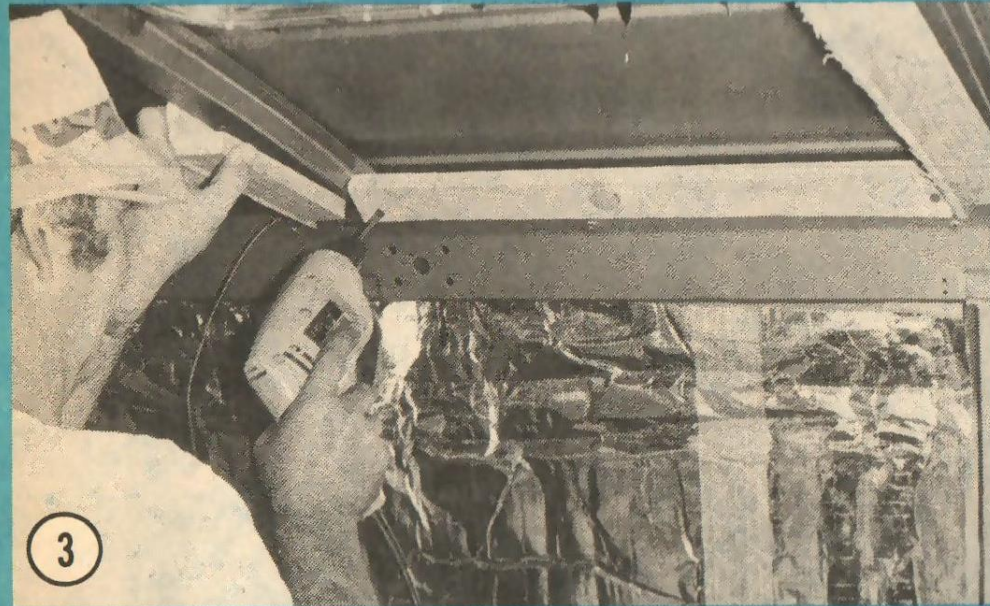
By Carl Caiati



1
Hole is cut in inner ply sheet to accommodate sunroof frame. Master template sections provide the sizes.



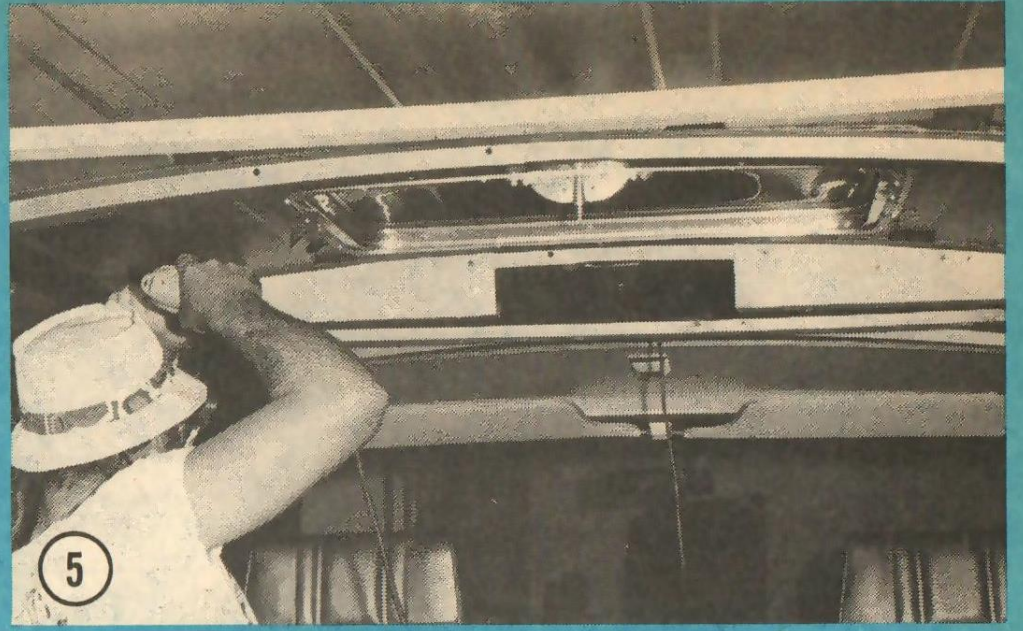
2
Outer (drop) horseshoe sections are cut from 3/8 inch plywood sheet stock.



3
Underbracing is added for securing plywood sheets.



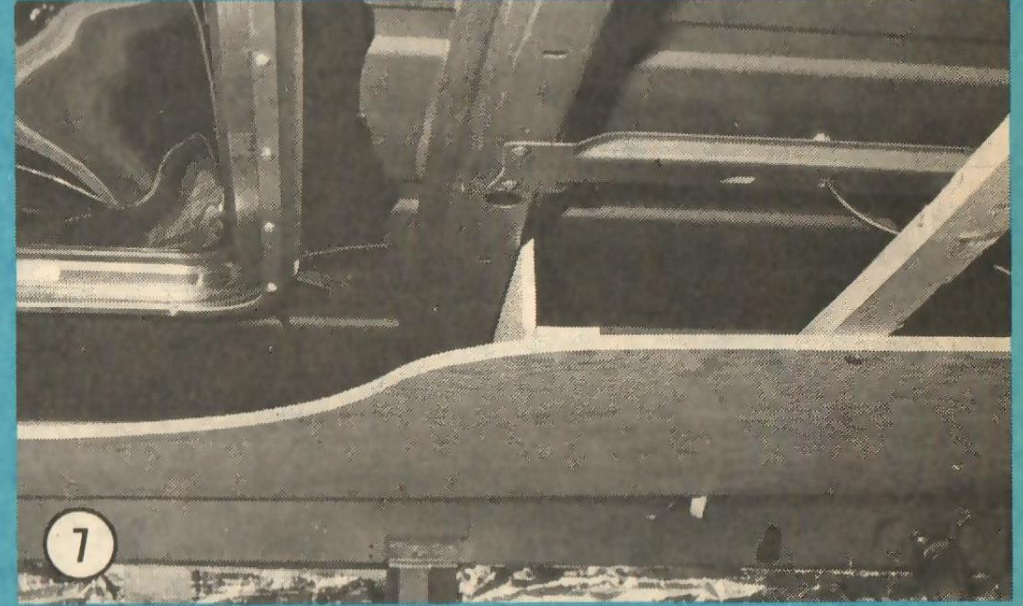
4
Foundation sections for the drop ceiling are finalized. They will be secured to metal roof ribs with sheet metal flat head screws.



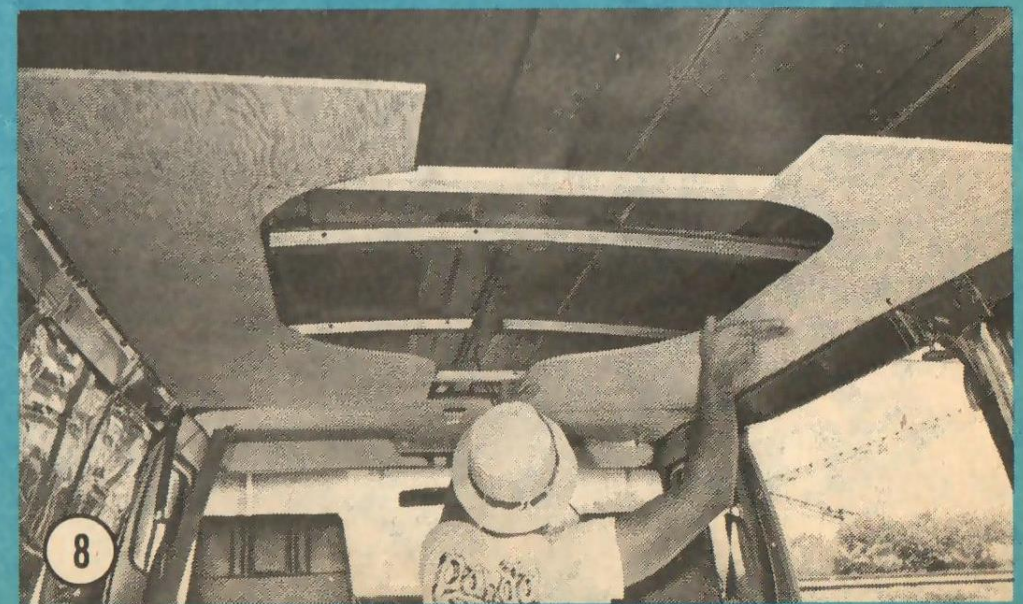
5
Sections are affixed. Space in the middle is left vacant to form the bottleneck section of the ceiling.



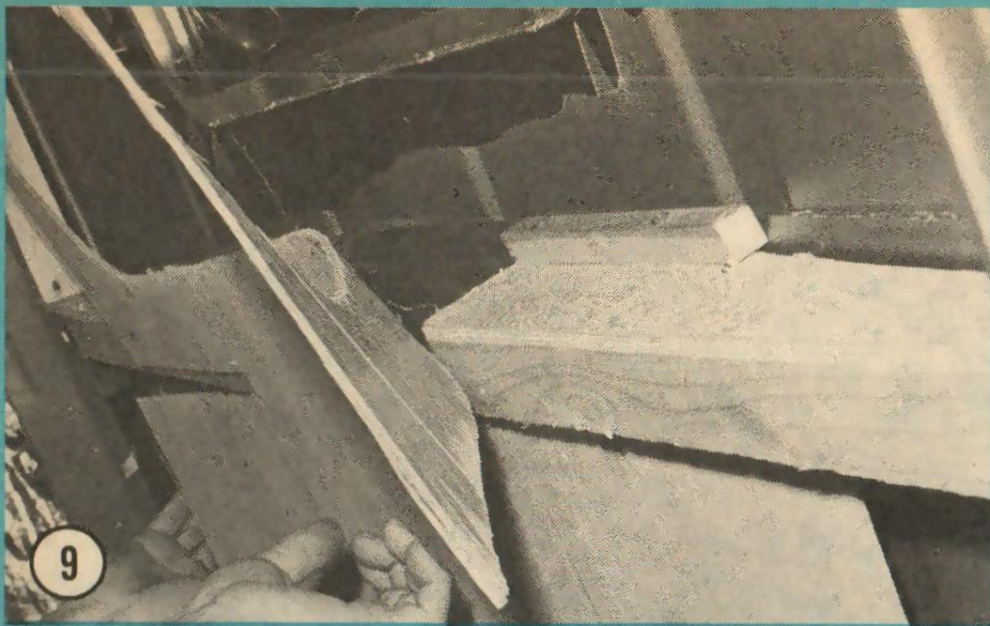
6
Horseshoe sections are tacked into place for eyeball alignment.



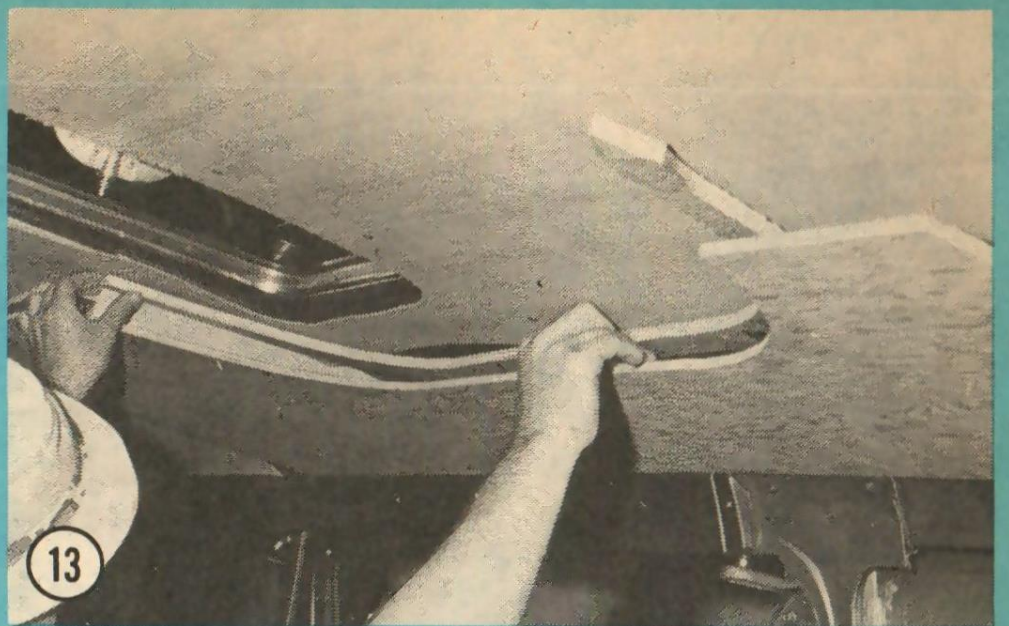
7
Brace section (right of photo) runs from one side to the other and is tacked on to hold sections in place.



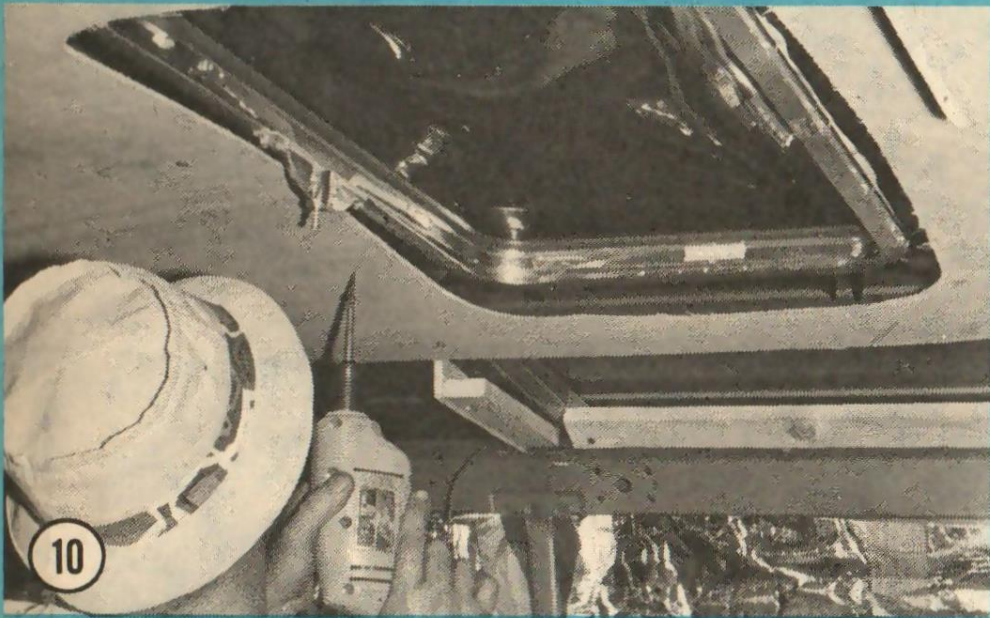
8
Leyrer places the other half.



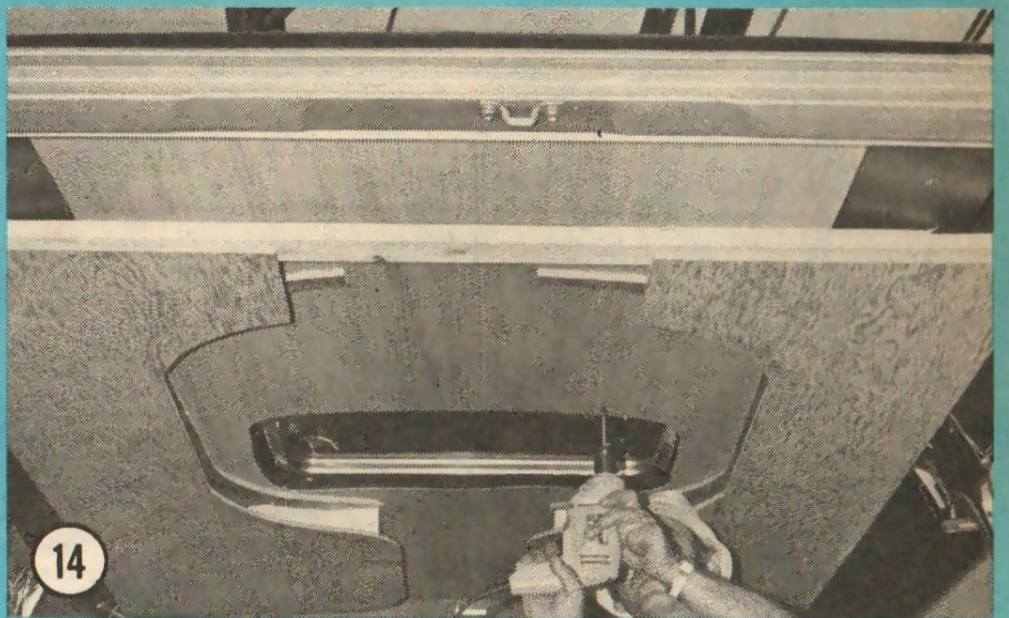
The middle section is notched, then shoe horned over bracing and ribbing.



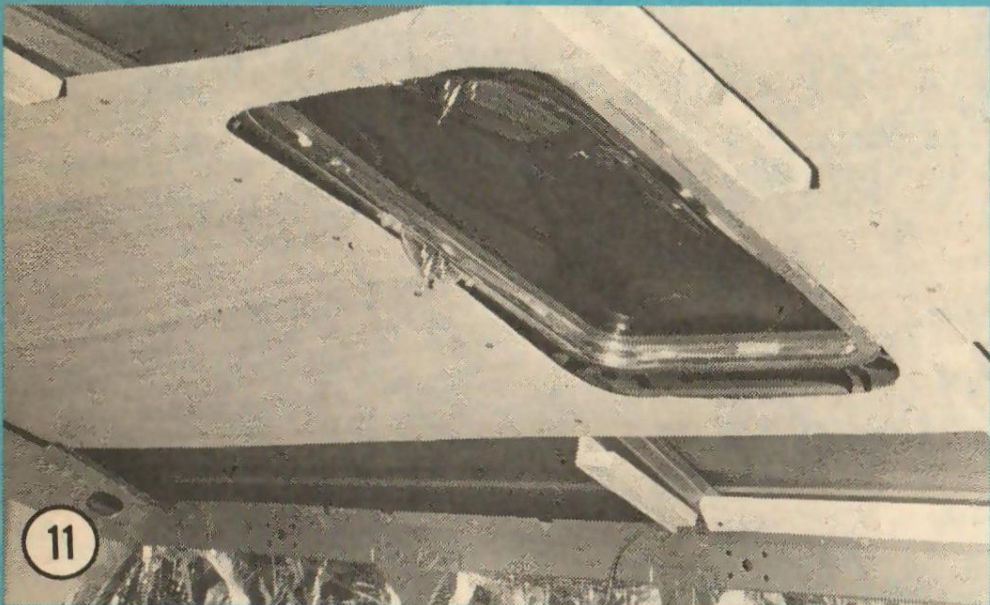
The inner lip is added for securing inner step facing.



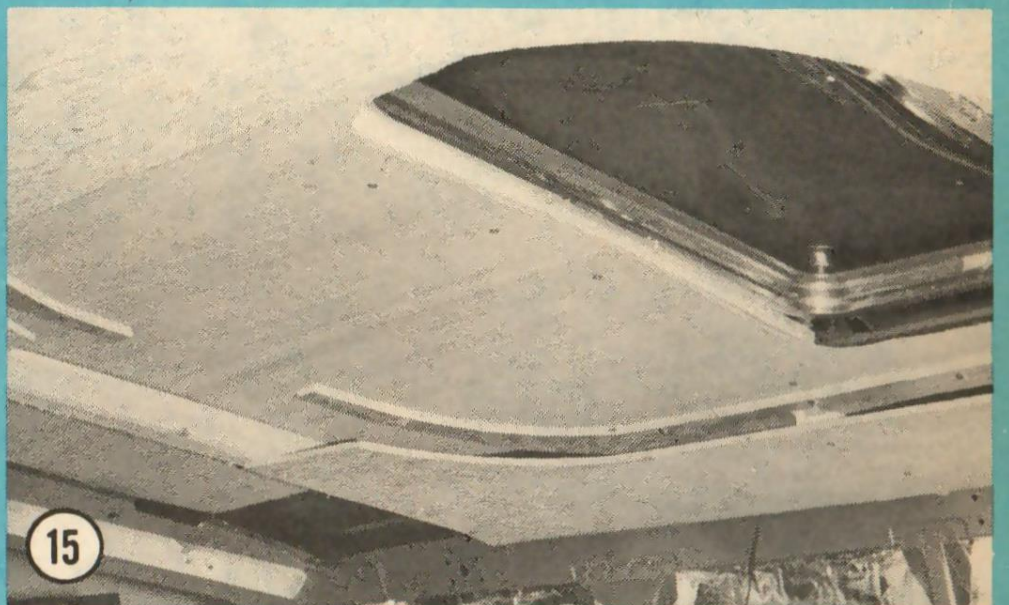
Inner piece is screwed into place.



Ceiling is fully secured as the perimeter of the sunroof is screwed down.



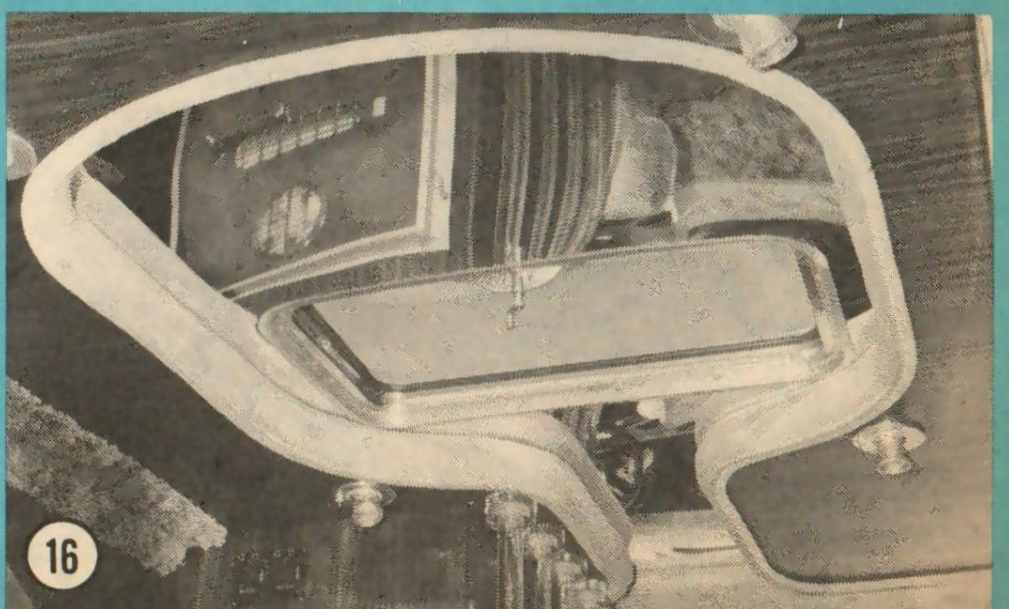
Inner recessed facing in place.



Framework for the drop ceiling completed.



After the inner sheeting is secured, horseshoe sections are added to form the drop step.



The *Badger* drop ceiling. For this ceiling Brazilian Rosewood was chosen to cover the horseshoe pieces.

Making use of ABS plastic's ability to take any shape, Automotive Accessories Unlimited has introduced a single molded unit which replaces the entire front headliner of your van. The innovative one-piece console, marketed by AAU, is designed to fit the latest Ford, Chevy, GMC or Dodge vans. The unit comes in flat black and can be easily painted to match your van interior or finished with a padded insert and sunroof.

The console is fire retardant, mar resistant and is supplied with pre-formed panels to house three instrument gauges, an AM/FM/CB and digital clock. Other standard features include: built in sun visors, passenger glove box and chrome trim plates. A list of optional accessories features an AM/FM/CB with power antenna, digital clock, Astra View sunroof, and directional reading lamps.

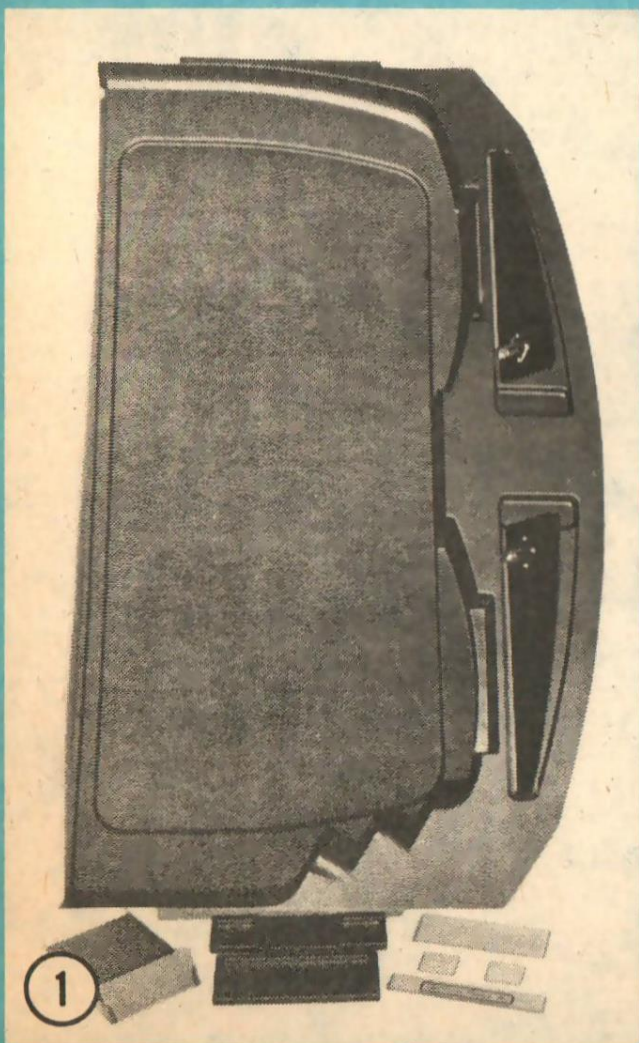
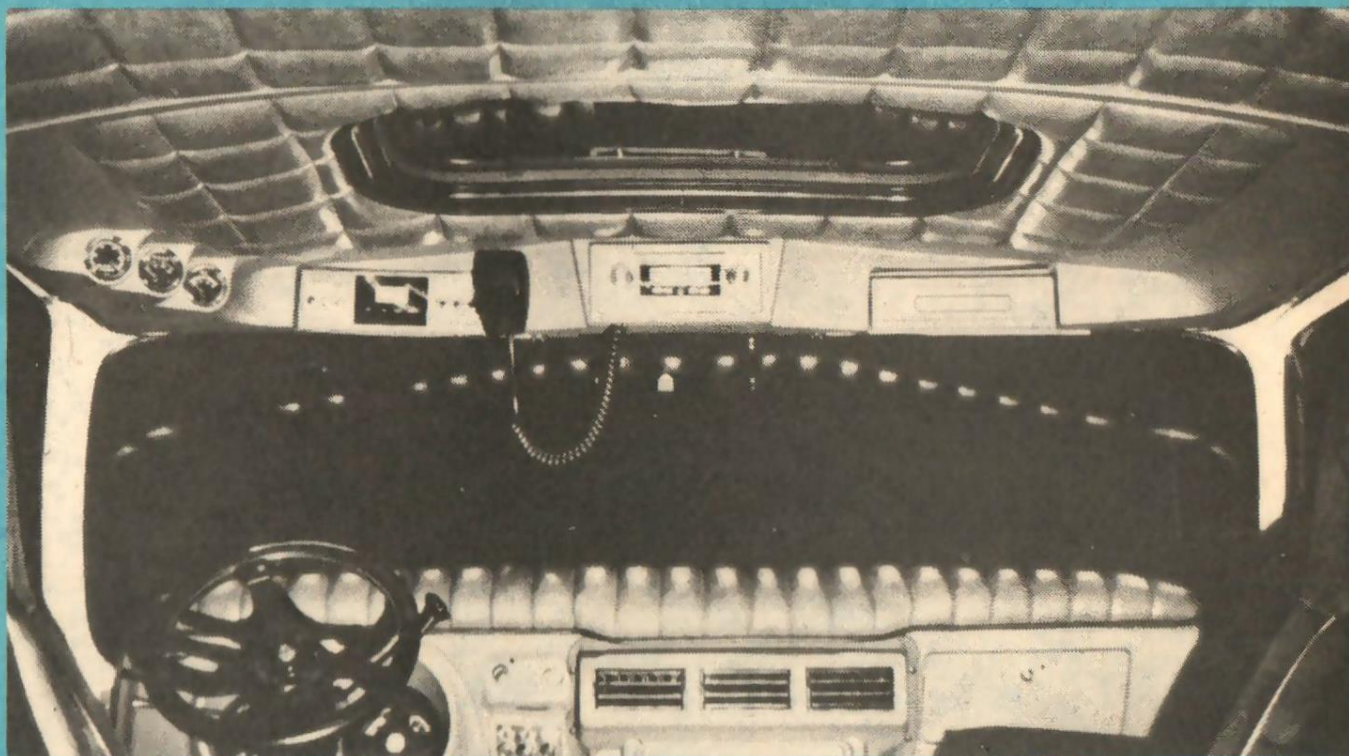
Installation is simple and the consumer can use his existing radio equipment and gauges purchased from any automotive supply shop.

For a closer look at the new product, CVM visited Custom Vans by Star, in Anaheim, California, for a first hand look at the console and its easy installation.

For price and availability of AAU's console and accessories, write to Automotive Accessories Unlimited, Dept. CVM, 2609 Woodland Dr., Anaheim, CA 92801. ●

Improving Your Overhead

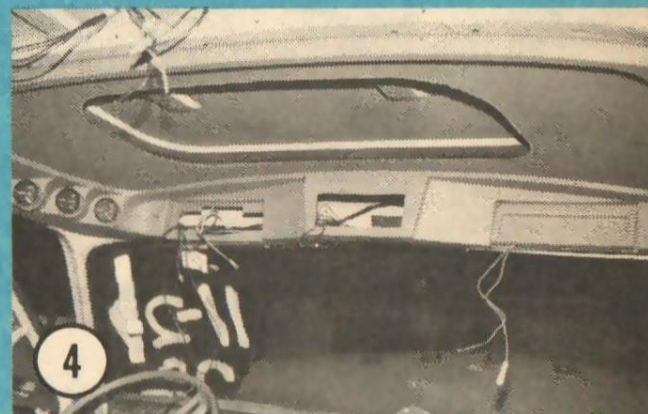
A New Concept in Console Design



Basic Kit. One-piece console with bracket, face plates, sun visors and trim.



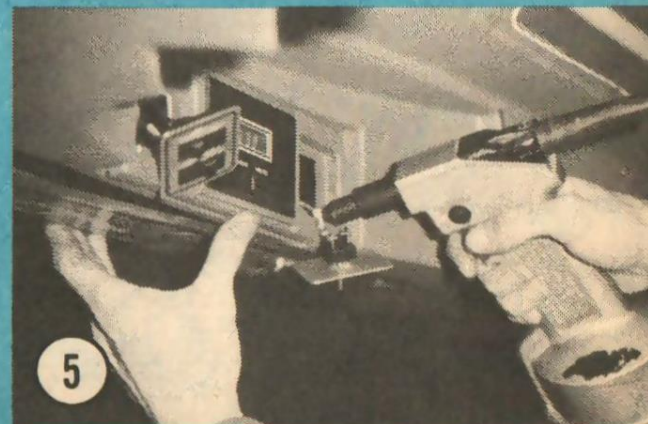
The first step is the hardest. Grouping all the wiring for radio, clock and gauges. Production models of the console will have a wiring harness to eliminate some of the tangle.



Simple wiring is pulled out through openings, gauges are connected and placed in their pre-formed housing. The sunroof port has already been cut in the roof of the console overhead.



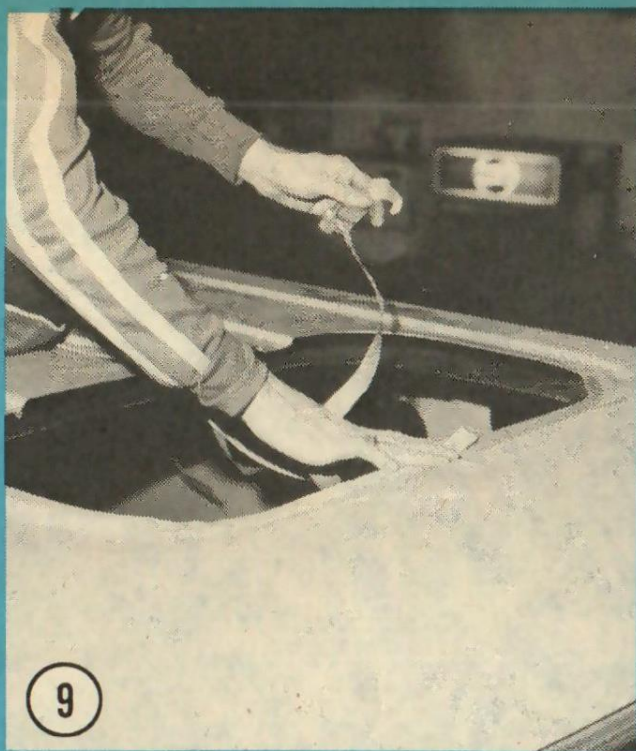
The entire console is mounted into the ceiling beams with pop rivets or sheet metal screws.



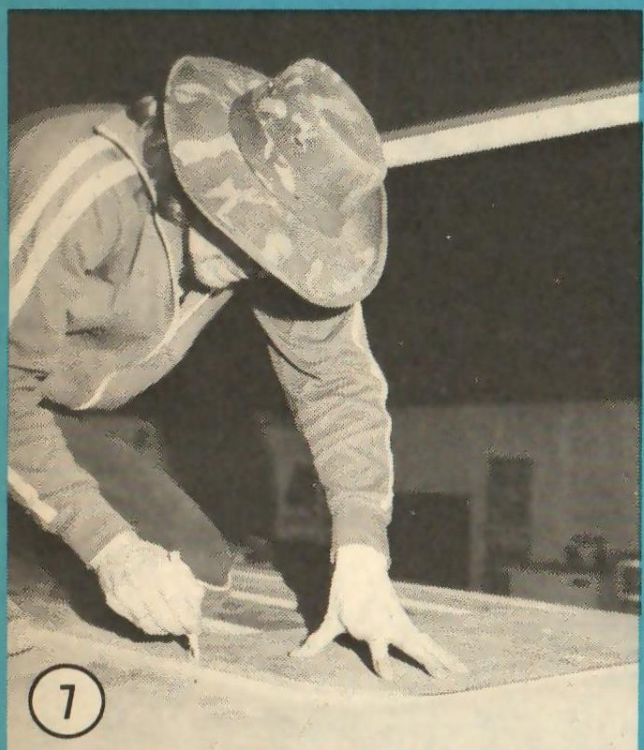
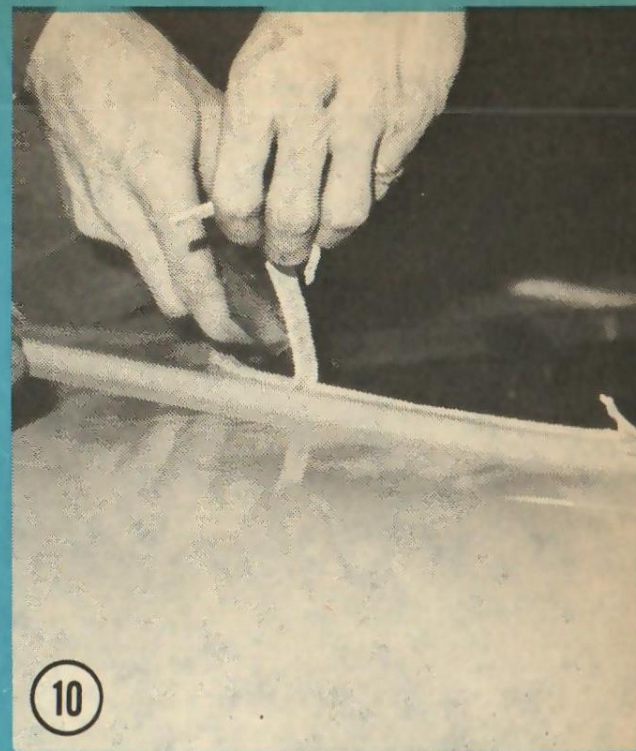
After wiring is complete, digital clock and radio are placed in face plates and mounted in console with pop rivets.



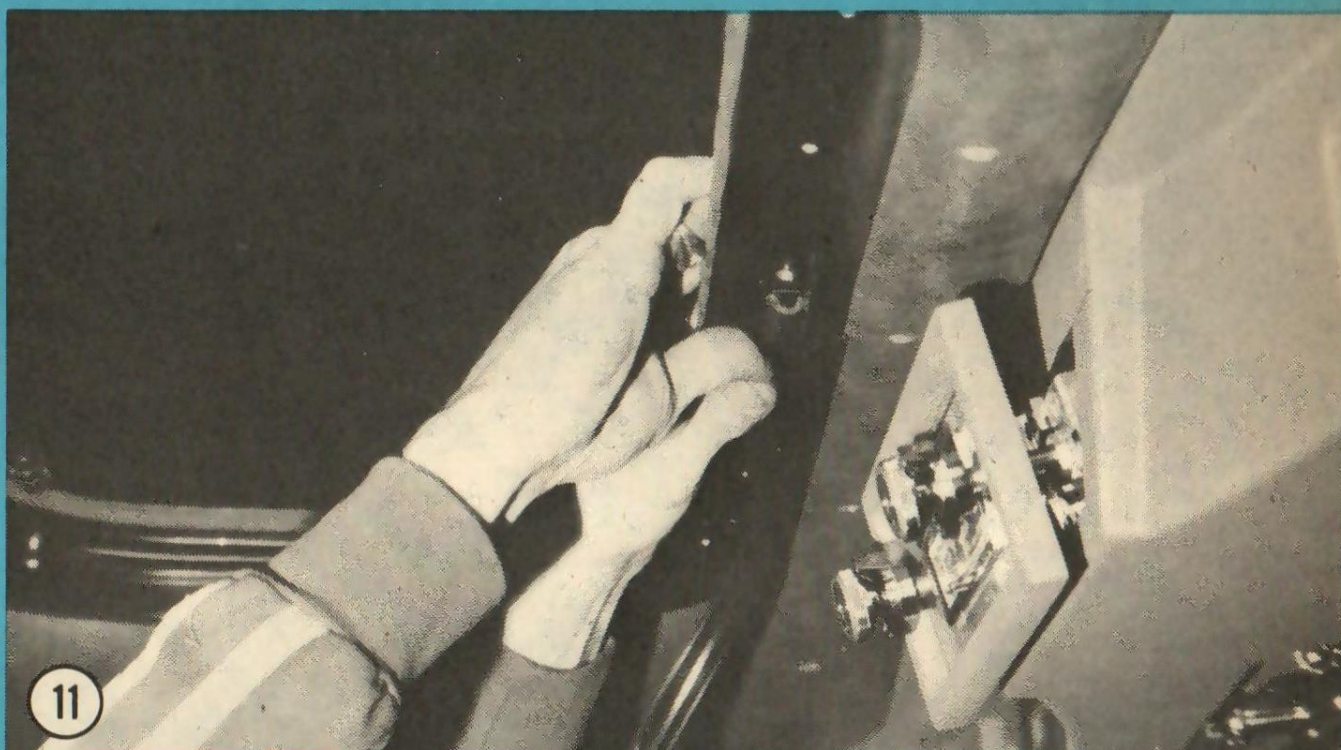
6
To cut sunroof port in roof, a template made by outlining the frame on thin plywood is positioned and pilot holes are drilled.



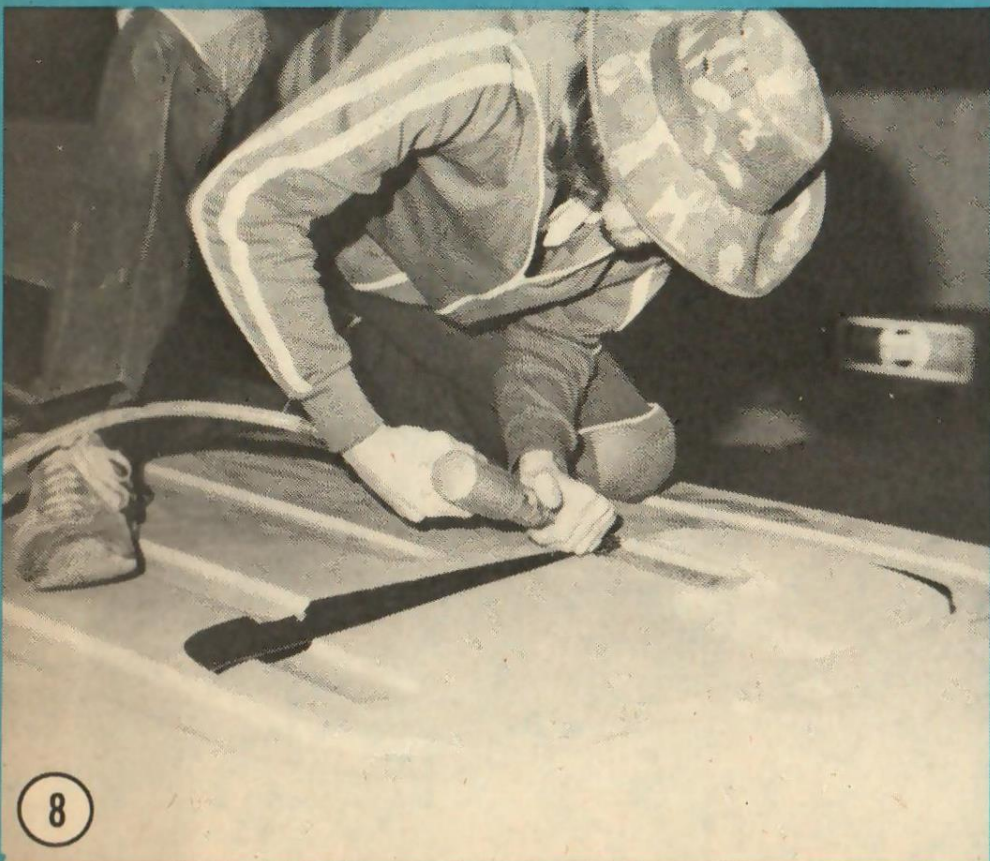
9
Putty tape is placed around the opening, the outer frame is dropped in place and the rough edges trimmed.



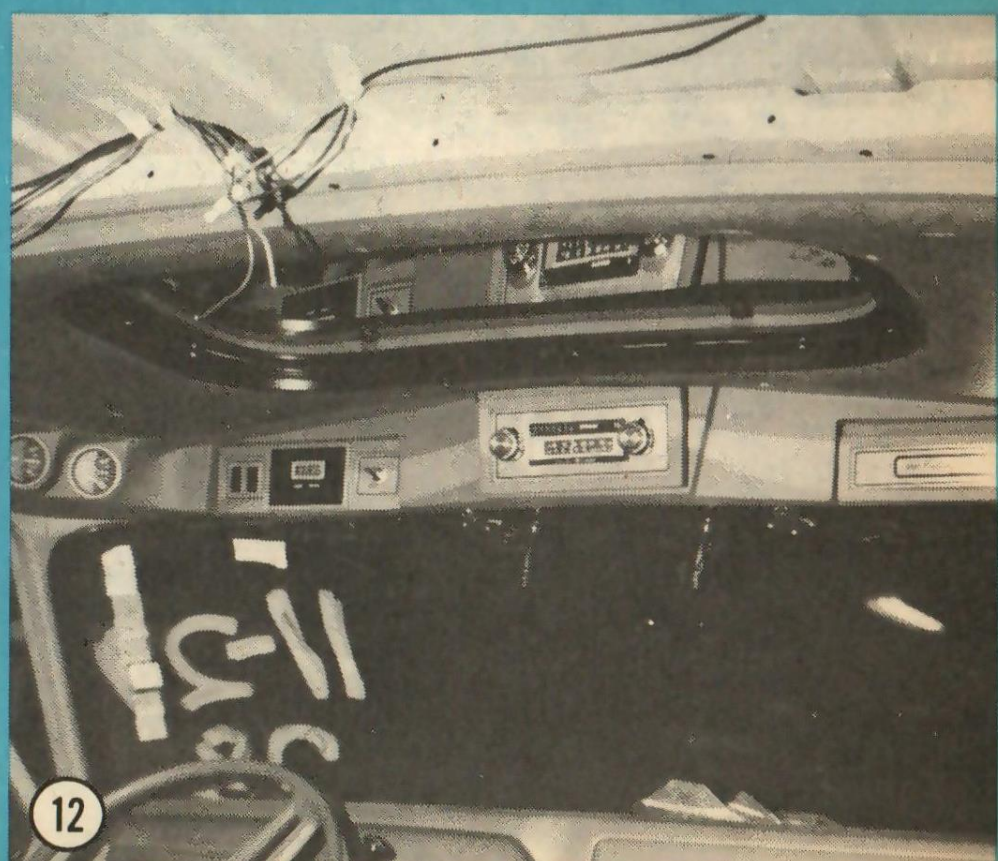
7
By lining the holes up with the template on the roof, an outline is drawn in the exact position as inside.



11
The inside ring is screwed into the outer ring and interior trim molding (used to cover screws) is added. On this installation a vinyl insert was added to match the interior. The sunroof frame holds the insert in place. As an option, matching material can be used, a padded insert or polished metal for a mirrored look.



8
Roof opening is cut.



12
The finished console with vinyl insert. Instructions for optional trim is available from the manufacturer.

How to Design and Build Your Own Snack Tray

By Dennis Adler

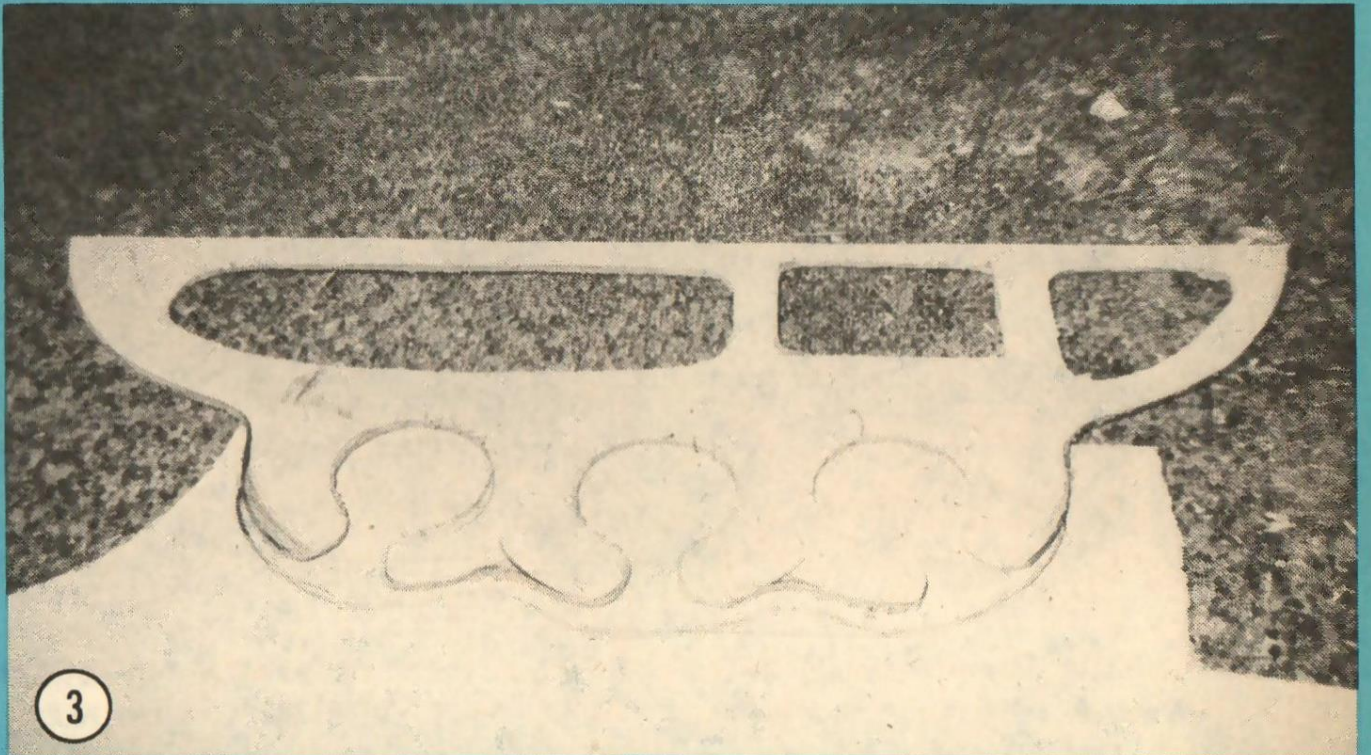
Last month CVM presented a pictorial rundown of the latest snack tray designs for early and late model vans. It was quite a selection, but perhaps there was nothing that really turned you on. If you are the type who prefers to create your own accessories whenever possible, here is a simple guide to snack tray construction.

This is a custom design with a couple of trick modifications not usually found on commercially produced products. Our pattern is for a Ford doghouse which is the most complicated design. If you pick up on this one, Dodge and Chevy are a snap!

As usual power tools were selected to speed work along, but hand tools can be used to produce the same quality results. Our choice of wood is 1/2 inch Birch. Birch has excellent stain qualities or for a natural look an exceptionally nice grain texture.



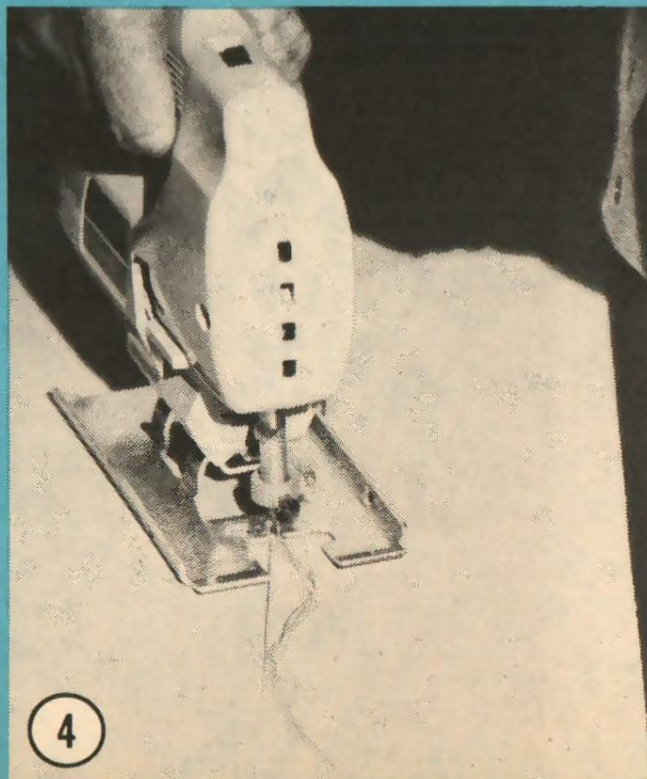
Create your own pattern. On cardboard, draw the pattern of your engine cover. You can add cuts for ash tray (on Ford) storage slot and then your cup holders.



The bottom part of the shelf should be 1/2 inch farther extended than the upper half.



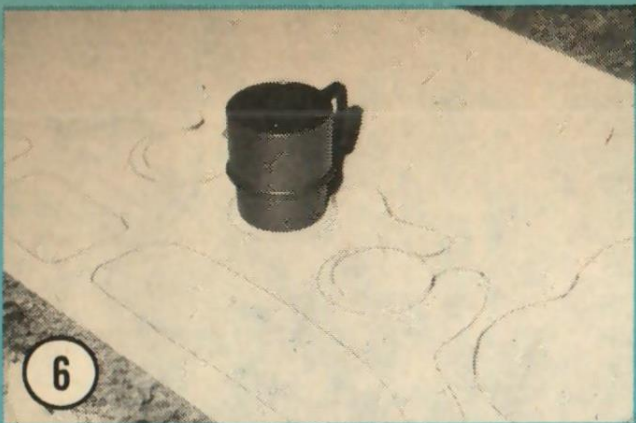
Using a saber saw cutout the openings.



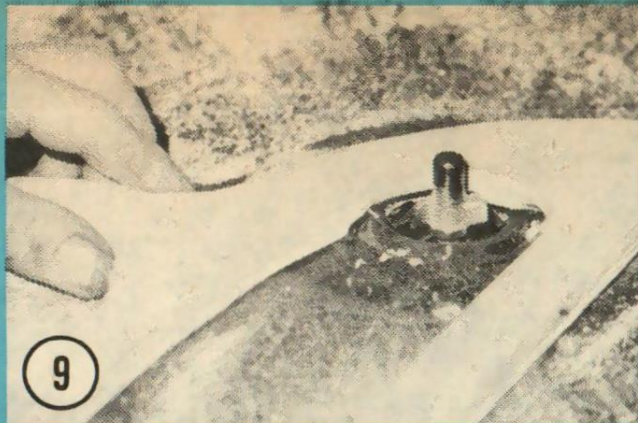
Cut the bottom section out and your templates are complete.



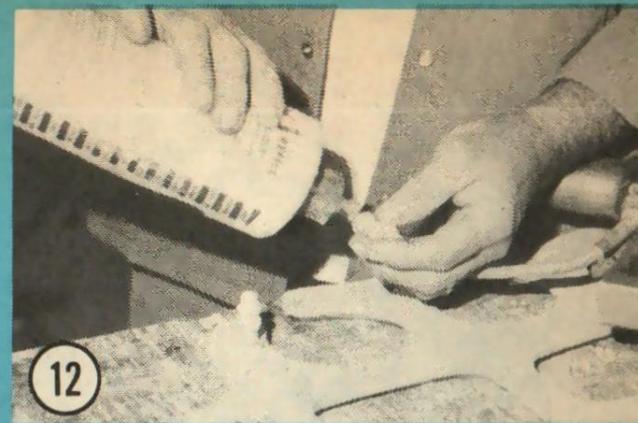
Outline pattern on the finish wood selected for construction.



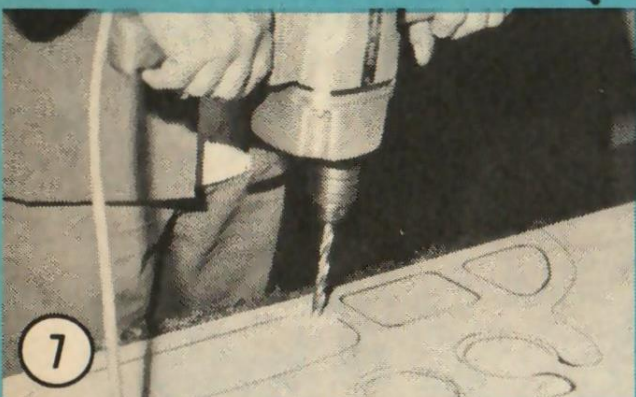
6
Double check the size of your cup openings. On this design we are leaving a slot for the cup handles. This allows cups of any height to fit without the handle hitting the edge of the opening.



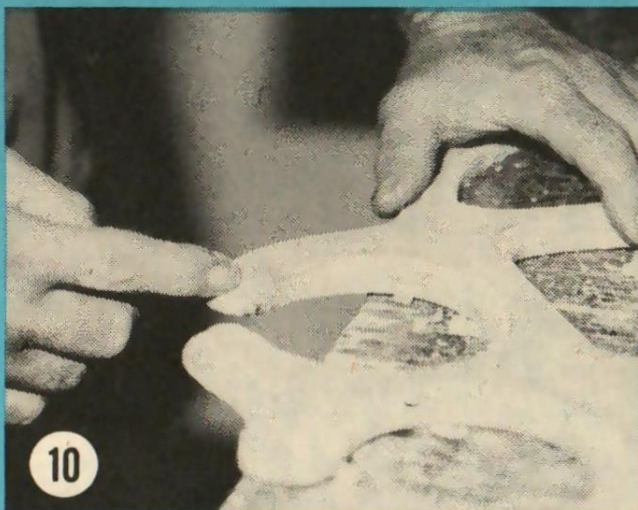
9
Route all edges with a table mounted power router or a wood rasp.



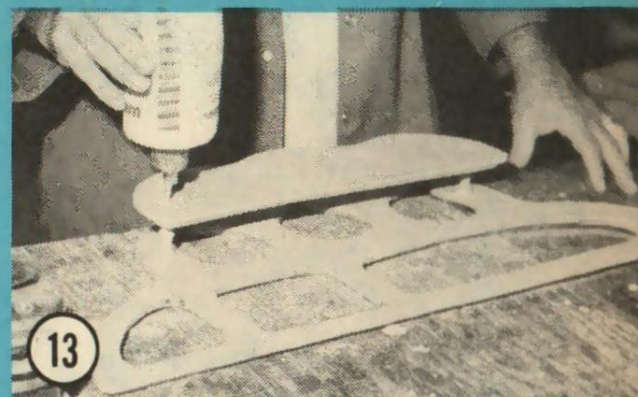
12
Drill holes for lathe turn dowels which will join the tray and bottom support. Dowels are available in various sizes at all building supply centers. After holes are drilled, glue the dowels in place.



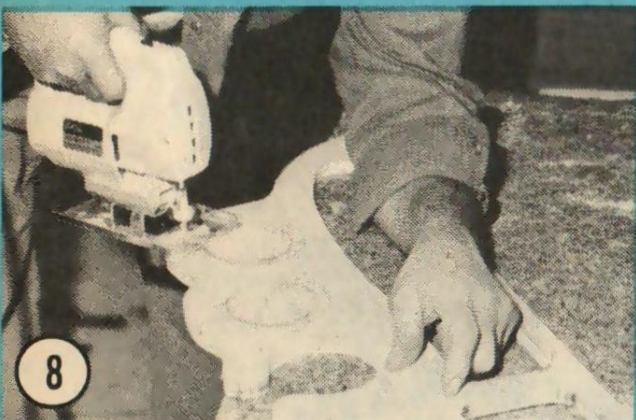
7
Check your measurements once more and cut out tray using a skill or saber saw. It is a good idea to drill pilot holes at the edge of each opening to be cut. If you selected a finish wood, such as Birch, and use a skill or saber saw, always cut with the good side of the wood down.



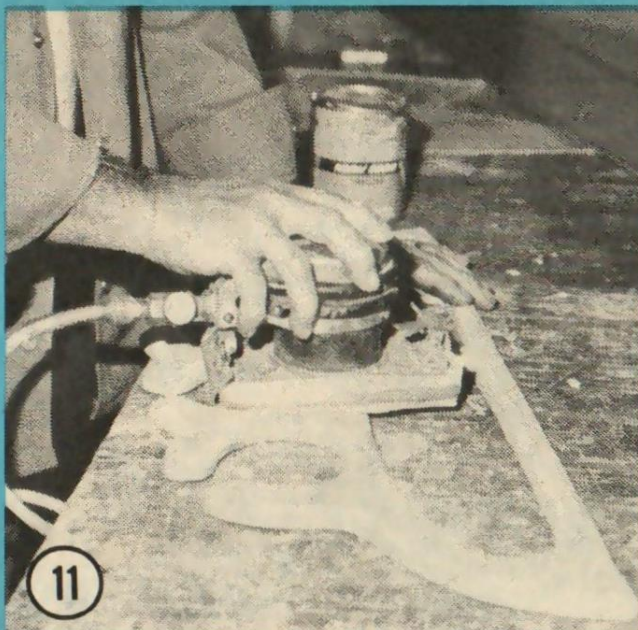
10
Fill router imperfections with Fix wood patch.



13
Position and glue bottom half of shelf. Since the dowels will only go so far into the holes drilled through the bottom half, add some sawdust to the glue to create a stronger bond and fill the open space.



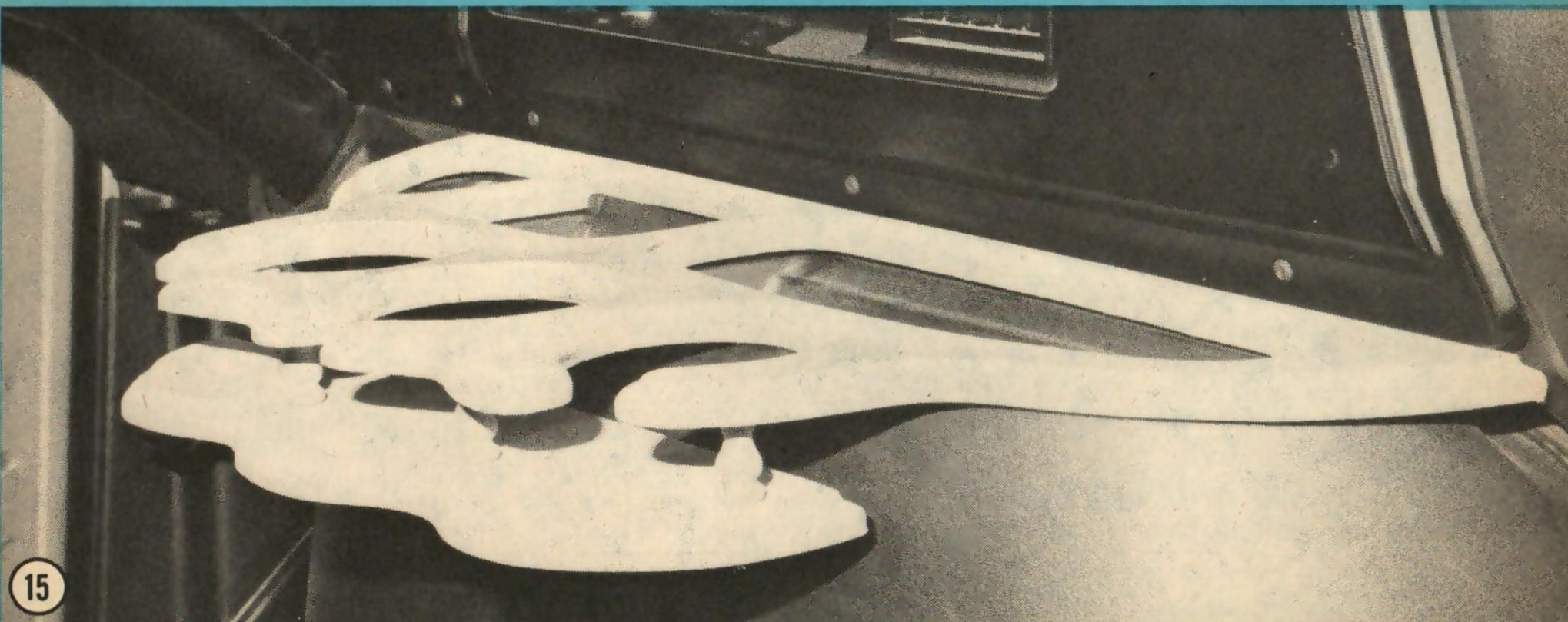
8
Cutting openings for cups and accessory access to engine cover.



11
Sand down all surfaces with fine grained sandpaper or power sander.



14
With fine grained sandpaper, smooth out all the routed edges.



15
Your snack tray is finished. You can either finish it with Watco Oil Stain or any other good stain or a clear varnish if you prefer a natural wood look. A third option is to cover the top with Formica. This final step is a matter of personal choice. We elected to go natural.

General Electric Model 3-5818

By Byron Wels



Man! They keep getting better 'n' better, don't they? We thought we had seen the last word in CB rigs, but this one tops 'em all by far. CB is the only form of radio that can be improved *only* by improving the equipment. Other transmitter manufacturers can toot their horns about more power. In CB all they can do is improve the versatility, because the power is limited.

General Electric has set a new benchmark with this unit, for it's by far and away the most versatile system we've ever seen. It's packed with everything that we, as operators, could possibly want, and a few things we haven't even thought of as yet. Let me give you an example. . . .

Do you prefer a microphone or a

telephone-type handset? Would you believe that this rig actually gives you a choice? You get both mike *and* handset, and can have your druthers about which to use. The handset cradle can be mounted anyplace. Sling it under the rig for under-dash mobile or console mounting, over the rig for use in the home 20. What's more, you'll notice some operating controls on the handset cradle. You can use the handset and its built-in earphone for completely silent operation, or you can use the mike in the handset and the built-in speaker in the rig, or you can use both the earphone and the speaker, or the speaker alone, and—you say you want more? Suppose I tell you that replacing the handset in the cradle

automatically cuts off the handset—like hanging up a phone!

But hold onto your hats, this is only the beginning.

The 3-5818 offers a full 40 channels with phase lock loop digital circuitry and a large L.E.D. panel under a red screen that permits easier daylight viewing. The very latest conveniences for the operator are included.

Sure, you get a transmit light with modulation indication so the lamp flickers as you talk. And the more talk power you hit with, the brighter the lamp glows.

You get an antenna warning lamp, right there on the front panel. If you haven't got an antenna hooked up, or

Continued on page 70

Dick Krenzer has a shag rug on his van floor we'll bet you don't have. It weighs close to 200lbs., is alive, slobbers all over the place and answers to the name Tank or Rankin (depending on whether you want to be friendly or formal). Actually, the van, dubbed *Big Woofer*, was designed for Krenzer's comfort as well as transporting Tank, his old lady and two of their offspring to dog shows. Tank, if you don't read pictures before words, is a St. Bernard.

The result of Krenzer's design has been a show-stopping, low-bucks van that turns heads and wins prizes. Dick, a Ford dealer mechanic, has made good use of the factory stuff instead of scrapping it and dropping megabucks at the local doll-up shop. His wrench-turning ability also enabled him to do a few neat things under the hood.

From the outside, the E-150 looks pretty stock, except for solid mahogany running boards with umpteen coats of marine spar varnish. It's black with Ford's one-way windows.

Black, you Westerners and Southerners exclaim in awe? Your amazement is why is it black. Dick had planned to have murals painted on the sides during a recent trip West but the shiny, jet black color elicited so many stares and comments that he scrapped the project. In all fairness, we Easterners aren't intimating that your attitude indicates a touch of lunacy. And before some engineer starts quoting, chapter and verse,



laws of optical transmission of heat, let us state that Dick lives in western New York, land of snow and salt. As long as you keep black washed, it looks nice, even if it is driven 70 miles a day round trip to work. And, the few days that the sun is hot enough to roast the occupants can be counted with your sneakers in place.

Speaking of snow and stuff, the running boards were put on for a reason other than decoration. The Imaginary Glass front flares and spoiler do not come down low enough to catch the slush from the front wheels as they do in back. Dick's father remembered the good old days when cars with running boards had no problem with flying slush. The project was completed before Dick ever heard of the Akron look.

The grille is stock but the square headlights from a 1977 LTD II, rest in home fashioned buckets. Driving lights, mounted in the grille, are from Desert Dynamics, while the roof rack

Continued on page 28

BIG WOOFER

Mild Custom or Expensive Dog House

By Duane Pancoast



is off a Ford LTD. The mid-beams had to be widened, though. Dick did this by using two stock pieces and splicing them together. He also used front pieces fore and aft to eliminate the integral spoiler on the stock rear parts. Dayton G70 and Western Auto L60 tires are mounted on Cragar SS wheels with locking lug nuts.

Inside the sliding door, there is no carpeting on the floor, except for dear old Tank. In fact, it is vinyl kitchen flooring for easy cleaning of dog hair, saliva and products of other accidents. The sides and ceiling are blue shag. All cabinetry is hand built with real wood paneling, all of which came from a single 4 foot by 8 foot sheet with some left over. That takes careful planning.

In the cockpit, the original Ford captain's chairs have been retained. Rather than an overhead console, a carpeted shelf has been built to hold speaker controls for the dash-mounted Pioneer AM/FM/8-track, Gemtronics CB, two speakers and other small items.

A drapery track runs from just behind the driver's door all the way around the windshield area, attached to the underside of the shelf, to the back of the passenger door. Home made blue drapes provide privacy without interfering with the dash or seats but blocking the windows. A matching set of drapes is on the rear and side doors and a special flap bridges the pillar on the right for the

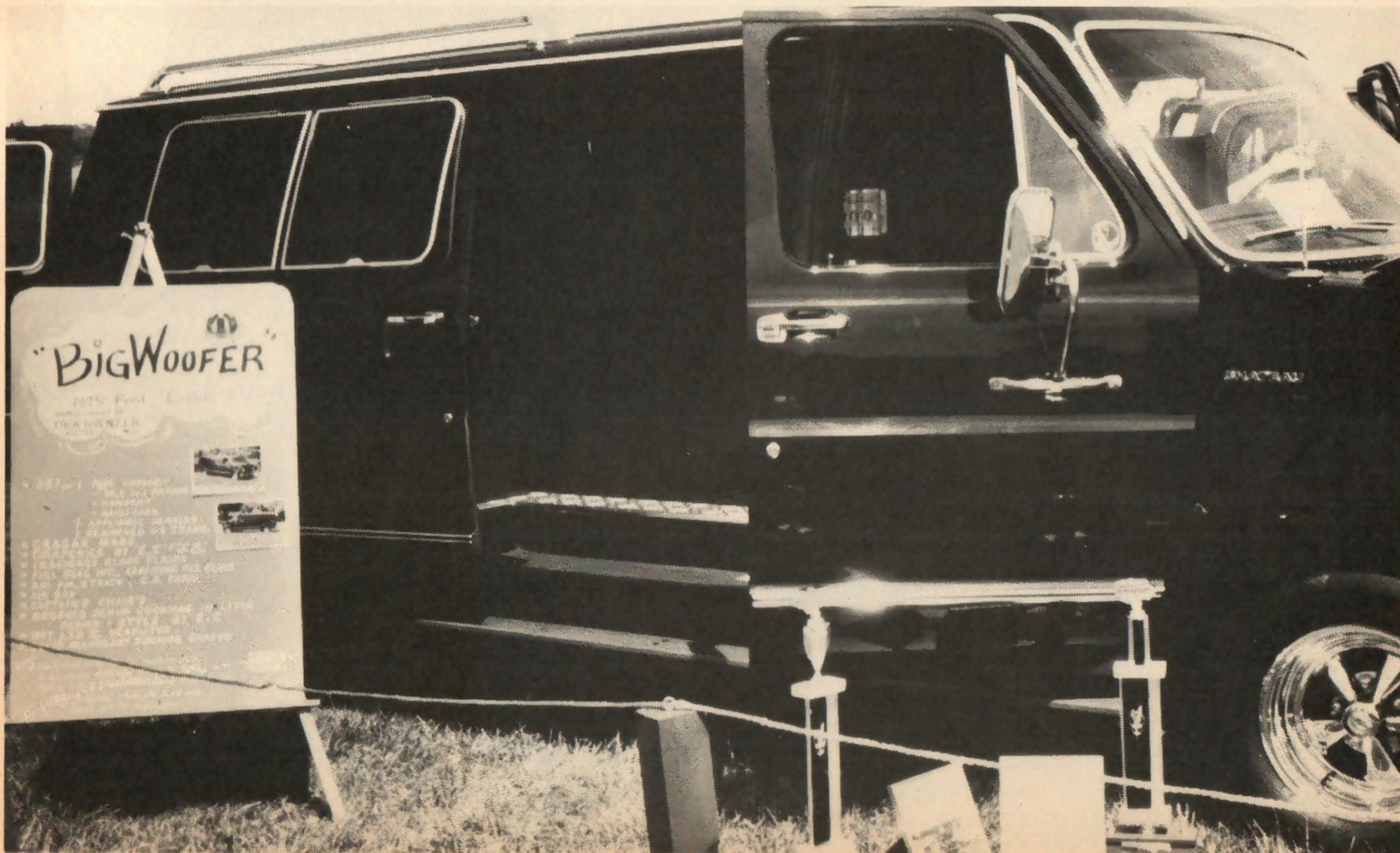
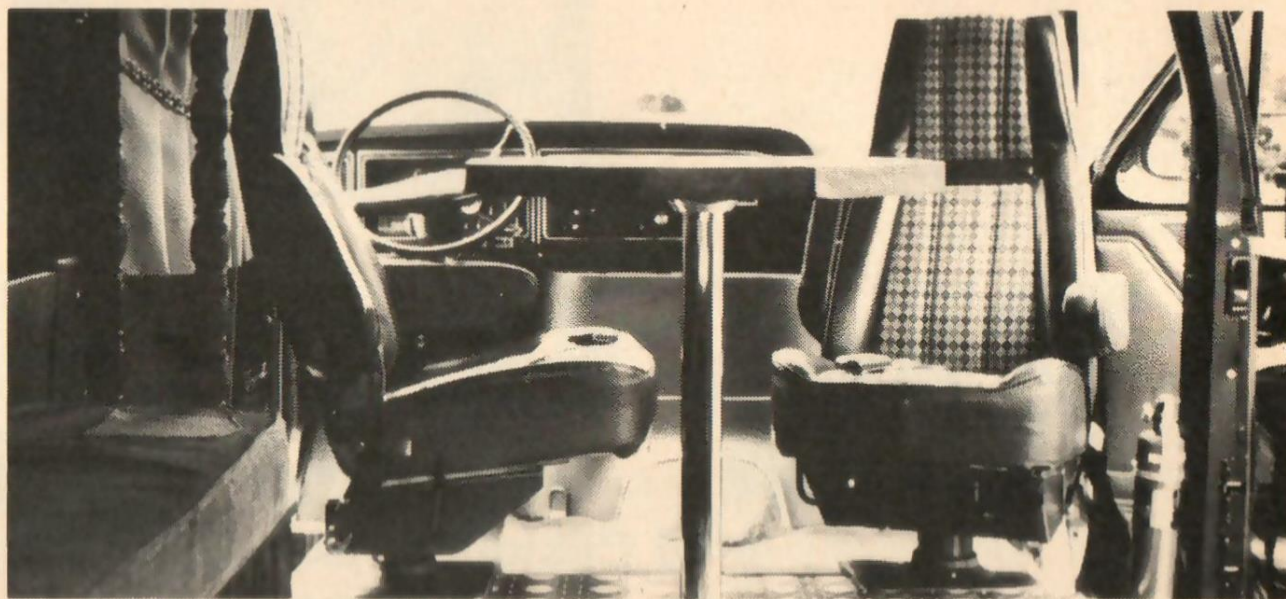
appearance of a continuous drape. The track was custom made at a local drape shop. The blue material matches the brushed denim doggy-proof cushion covers made by a friend. These cushions have actual pockets and leather name patches from Levi's.

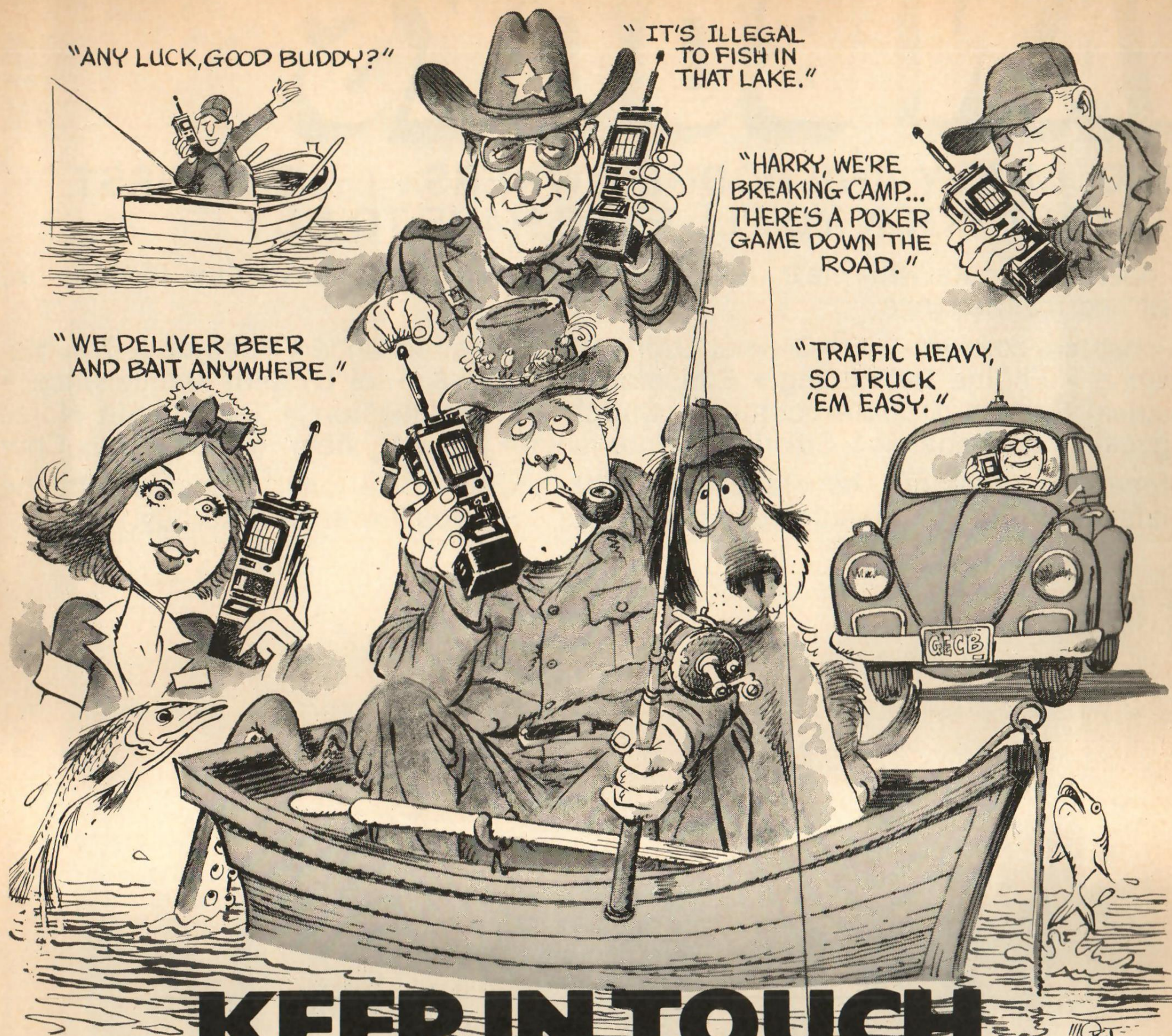
The thing along the left wall that looks like an air conditioner is actually a heater. In this climate, that's a more necessary accessory than air. The table is also home built using simulated slate counter topping material.

Under the hood, the 351W engine has been modified to include pistons from a 1969 351W 4cv boosting compression from 8:1 to 10:1. The '69 stock cam and '69 two barrel carb were used so the truck can still

operate on regular gas. Coupled to Appliance headers and shifting through a B&M kit, the rig has taken the Krenzlers and pets 50,000 trouble-free miles.

At the first show Dick entered, he won first for mild custom and second best engineered. At the second show, which was primarily an antique and sports car show with a truck class, he took second to a buddy with a showroom fresh 4x4 pickup. Nothing to be ashamed of because this truck is definitely a head turner no matter where it goes. Especially if slurpy Tank is peering out at you. If you are traveling New York State and see Dick, dial up Ch. 19 and give a shout for Big Woofer. He won't bark at you, just chat real friendly-like. ●





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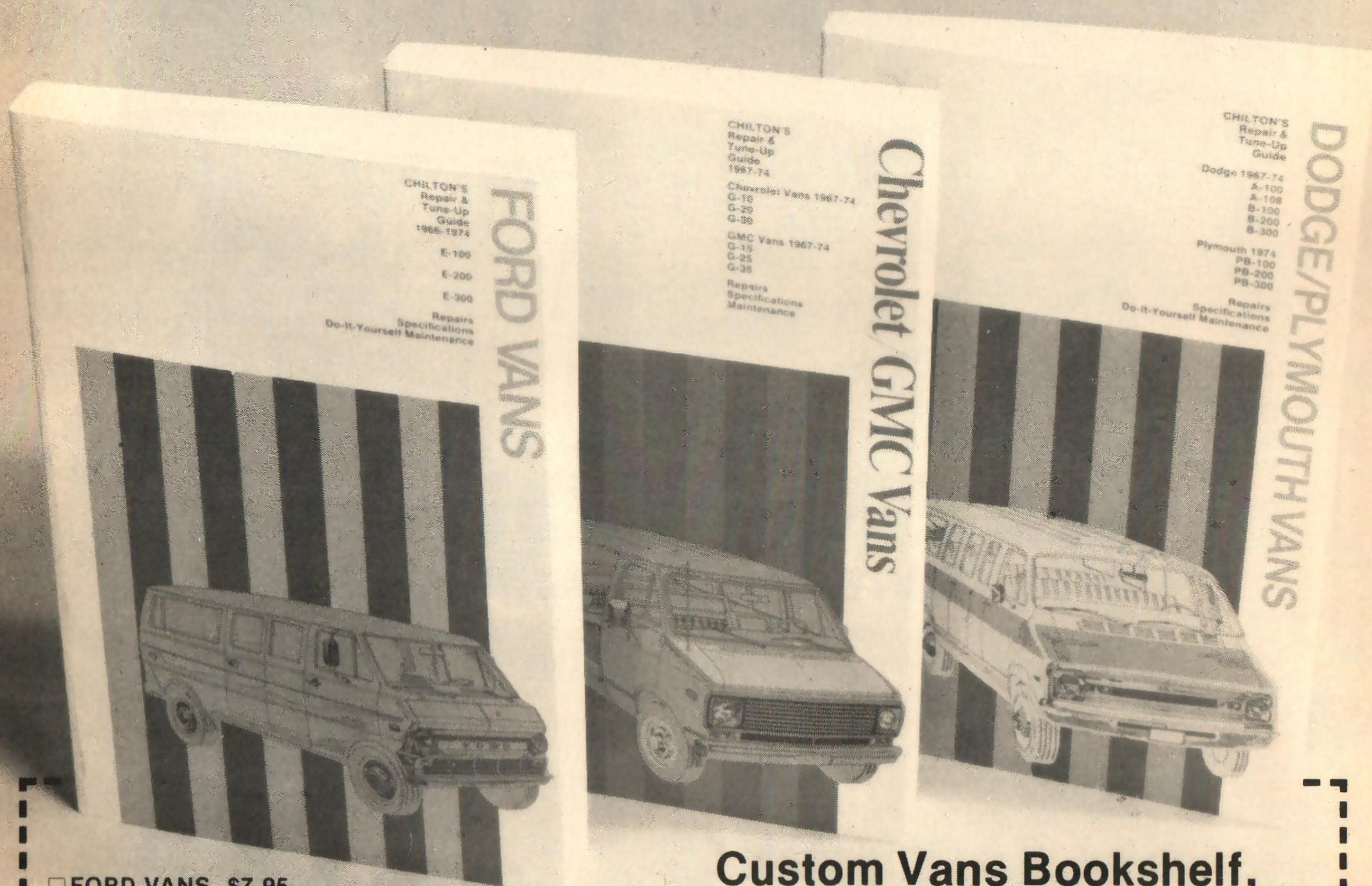
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A new phenomenon could hit the eastern and/or midwestern van movement this summer. That's the addition of trailers to the rigs. Pulling a little pop-top trailer to van-ins is an economical way to live comfortably while keeping the truck in showcase condition throughout the weekend. We are not talking about the two Canadian rigs featured in the "Vanning of the Future" article last month—the one made from the back end of a second Chevy van or the shingled shanty. These are part of the truck. The trailers discussed here are separate entities. They are for living while the truck is for showing.

We were surprised a couple of years ago while road testing a VW van for this publication when great interest was expressed at a public campsite not in the van but in the big 12 by 12 foot tent we were using. When we switched to a pop-up trailer last summer we were again surprised at the interest shown at truck-ins. Again, interest centered on the little trailer rather than the van.

In the January, 1977 issue, we featured Fred Vanderpool's junkyard Econoline. To house their two kids, the Vanderpools bought a used folding trailer and painted it the same colors as the prize-winning truck. Those interested in our trailer live rather frugally at van-ins in order to keep the truck clean for the Show-N-Shine. After all, most are held the morning after and who wants to clean up then? We have watched truckers with kitchen facilities cooking on portable propane stoves to keep grease from spattering on the nice interior. The same is true with eating. Many squat on the ground instead of dirtying the dinette. Then, come Show-N-Shine morning, it's instant panic to make the bed and find a place for dirty clothes and other unsightlies. That can all change if those vanners who gandered at our trailer invest a couple of grand in a unit. The purpose of this article is to give you a few hints on what is available and things to consider when shopping.

Our trailer happens to be an AMF Skamper. It was purchased not through any great deal of consumer research. Rather, it was an impulse buy. Really. With six humans and a big Labrador Retriever, a theme mural on our Plymouth Voyager would probably consist of that skinny mutt that chases phony rabbits. It's truly symbolic of the vehicles role as neighborhood bus. It is big enough, though, to hold all the tent camping gear we need, even though it is a pain in the butt to load before each trip. So, a trailer was not in the forefront of our mind.

While driving past a Skamper dealer

one night, we noticed a neat little package all set up. It was the model 108C with bunks folding out from each side, a dinette in front, sink and propane stove that can be used either outside or inside. Folded, it measures just over 10 feet long by just one inch more than six feet wide. Road height is 46 inches and the price only about \$1500.

The extent of our shopping was to call a friend in another city who sells Coleman trailers. Their smallest, the Concord, was not in stock; he would have to locate one in the system and we were leaving for vacation two days later.

Indicative of the vast amount of consumer research performed, we agreed to purchase the little Skamper. While writing the check, the salesman showed us how it opens and closes. The fabric is not attached to the bunks, exposing the mat-

resses while setting up and tearing down. This can mean a wet sleep. Another problem shown in the photos, is the high jump to the hitch. This can be compensated with a step-down hitch, but it lowers your ground clearance for getting into fields and backwoods.

The result is that we upgraded one notch to the Skamper 112, dealt to the same under \$2000 price as our friend could offer us the comparable Coleman. Because we lucked out, we offer a few suggestions so you might not have to trust to luck completely.

Camping trailers are offered in sizes from the mini that we first considered to tandem axle 18 footers such as a luxury boat by Steury selling for \$5000-\$6000. This sleeps

The author's rig in its set up position at North Carolina's Outer Banks.



VAN CAMPERS

A New Concept in Vanning

By Duane A. Pancoast



Although we used a free-standing dining canopy this year, we expect to get one that attaches to the trailer next season.



Fred Vanderpool bought a used folding trailer and painted it the same colors as his prize-winning van.

eight but is as impractical for most vanners as the little midget. That's the reason for the interest in ours. It is just about eight feet long, six feet, 11 inches wide with a four foot road height and can reach a van's conventional bumper hitch. It sleeps five comfortably and has room for a second friendly person on the converted dinette.

Tops pop by two methods. One has spring loaded outside roof supports; the other is cranked up. It is best to select the type with beds that slide out from front and back on tracks with the fabric or tent material attached to them. This will protect the interior from the elements while setting up. The fabric itself also should be considered carefully. Some are duck or canvas, most are vinyl; a few are even fiberglass. We prefer the vinyl from a waterproofing and upkeep standpoint. Duck is like a tent—you touch it from the inside during a rainstorm and you have started a leak. Vinyl, on the other hand, is like sleeping in a nylon tent. It does not breathe. We always have to keep the roof vent open or wake up to an inside rainstorm.

Brake requirements vary from state to state. In New York, approved trailer brakes are required if the gross



For the unbeliever, we visited our dealer and hooked on to a Skamper 108 to show the unbalance.

weight is over 1500 lbs. Our unladen weight is 994 lb.; GVWR is 1487. The weight factor also contributes to the hitch you will need. The smaller units can use a Class 1 hitch. This is the type that just bolts to the bottom of the bumper. When you get into the bigger units, such as tandem axle jobs, you will need a Class 3 hitch similar to those used for travel trailers. Really, the only reason we can imagine anyone selecting a big fold-out over a travel trailer might be if a boat is to be carried on top.

While gross weight determines such specifications as brakes, the tow vehicle hitch requirement is a combination of overall weight plus

hitch or tongue weight. This is the amount of weight actually pressing down on the back of your van. Our little bugger posts at only a 150 lb. hitch weight. This is small enough that our 14-year-old son and I can lift it from the hitch and roll it around on the dolly wheel anywhere we want to spot it. Skamper's largest unit, a tandem axle model, posts a 260 lb. hitch weight and requires the heavier, Class 3 hitch. This is the type that uses equalizer bars to balance the weight throughout the whole vehicle combination.

A good rule of thumb is that only about 12-15 percent of the total weight should be on the hitch. In our unit, this is assured by the factory installing only the icebox, water supply and one small cabinet forward of the axle. The other cabinets, which are located under the dinette, are rearward of the axle. Believing that a van with Class 1 hitch can handle a little more weight without beaming headlights skyward like anti-aircraft detectors, we pile duffle on the floor ahead of the axle and have never had a problem.

The ability to see the trailer tagging along behind may also be of interest to you. It is curious to watch passenger cars with folding trailers. The tops are often even with the car top, requiring trailer mirrors to see behind. A mini-trailer, such as the Skamper 108, besides screwing up your ground clearance and goofing up its own center of gravity, cannot be seen behind the van. You cannot see the top through the rear view mirrors or the sides through the elephant ears. We can just barely see the top of ours and can just about see the outside support arms through the sideviews.

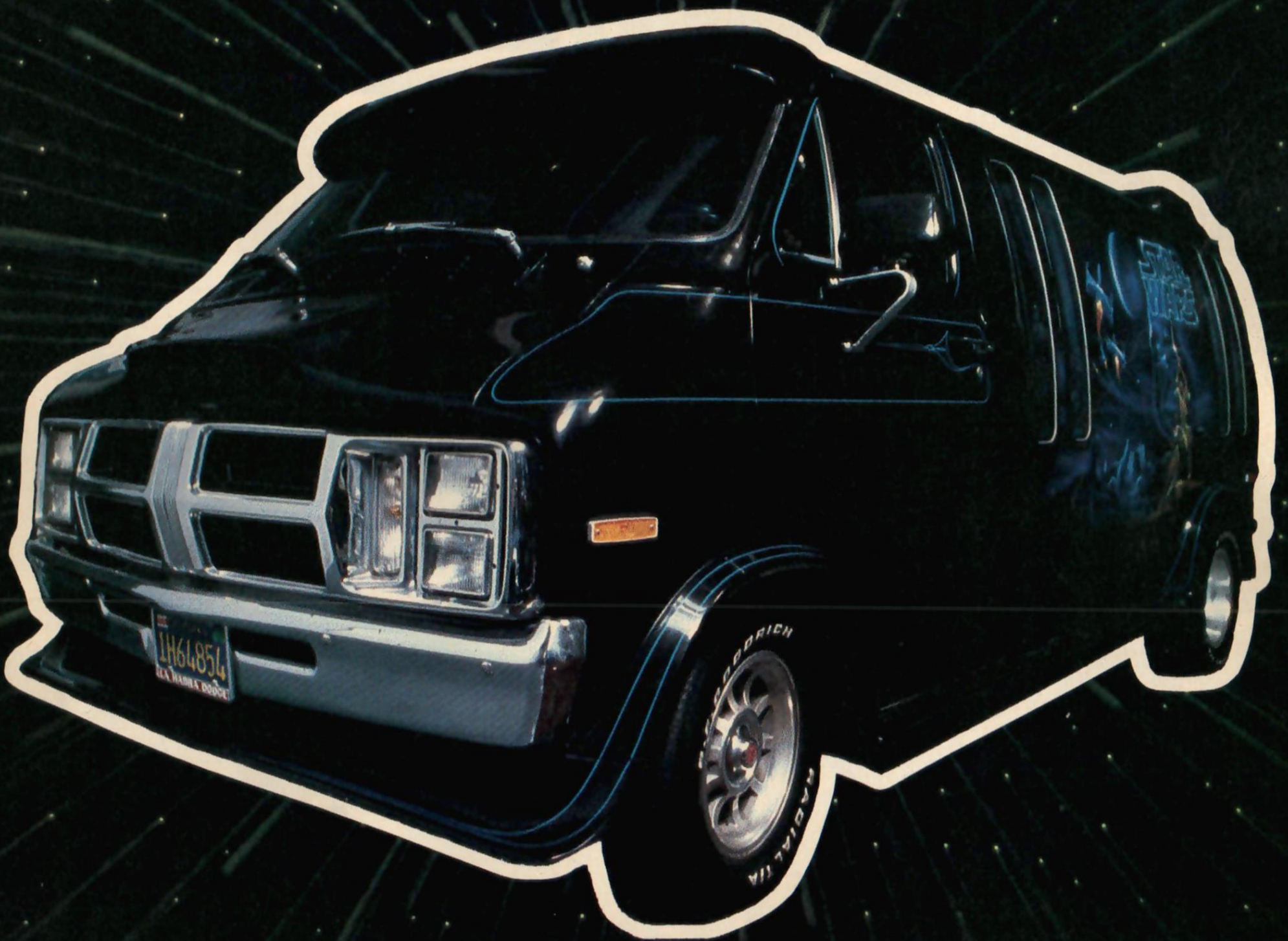
The RVIA (Recreational Vehicle Industry Association) has 18 members making folding camping trailers. (Even though you'll hear them referred to most often as pop-ups, the official name is folding camping trailers.) This makes it impossible to test or detail all of them. Our model has been the subject of inspection at upstate New York van-ins. That's only because it happens to have been about the only trailer at the event. If you are interested in a show van and a living trailer, we suggest you check out all of the dealers in your area. Most will have a small model like ours. Find one with the features, price, delivery, service and other things that make for a good deal before making a decision.

Partying after a van-in last year, one club speculated that they might be trucking together in motorhomes or campers a decade from now. From the trailer interest, the next decade may be here now. ●

THE ULTIMATE STAR WARS VAN

By Dennis Adler

Photography by Clyde Hendricks and Dennis Adler



Visions of Luke Skywalker, laser sword in hand, R2D2, C3PO and the villainous Darth Vader appear before our eyes. A scene from Star Wars? No, it's the outstanding graphics of Jerry Allen and Rubin Garcia's Secret City designers who teamed up to create the ultimate Star Wars van.

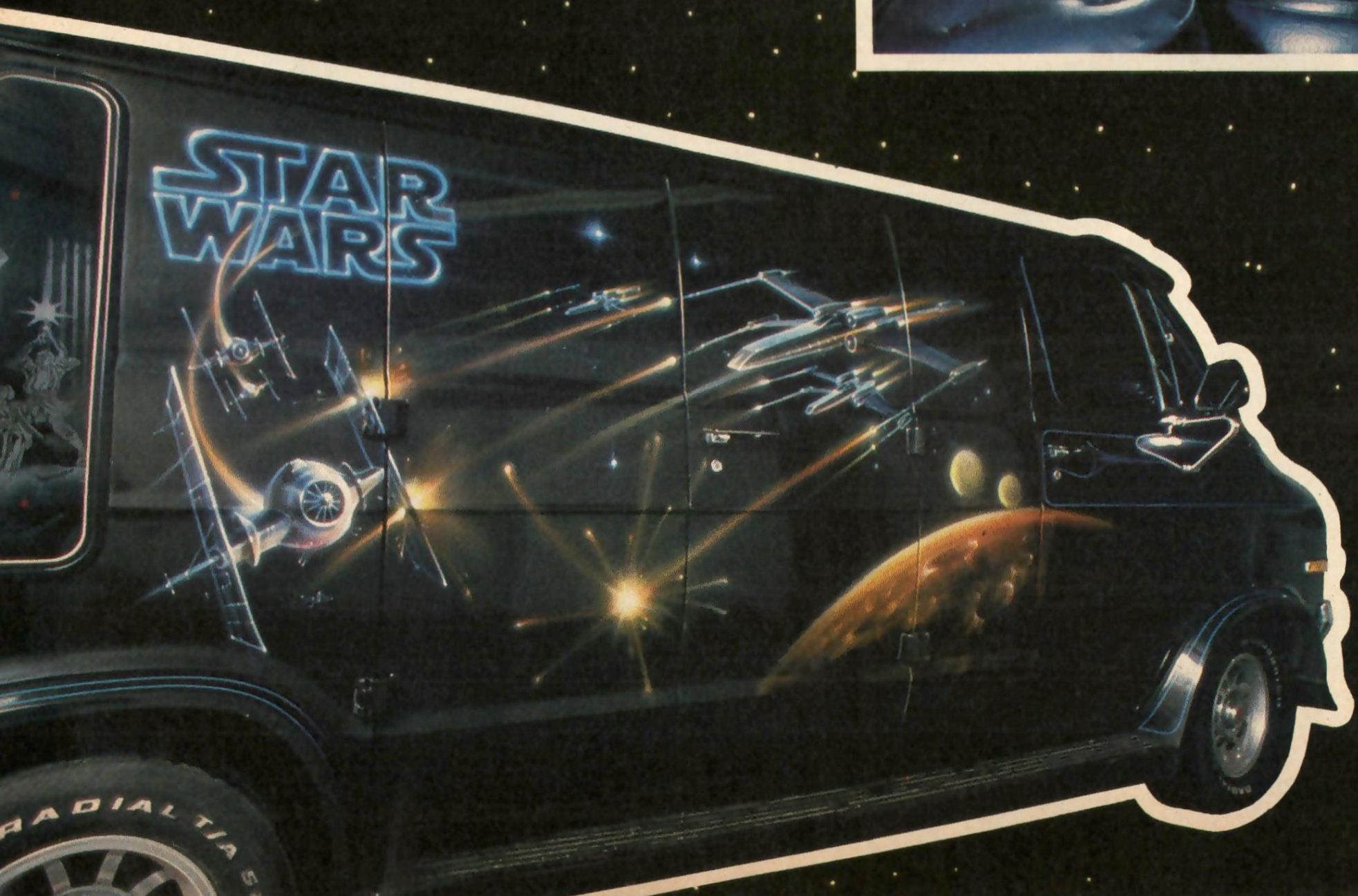
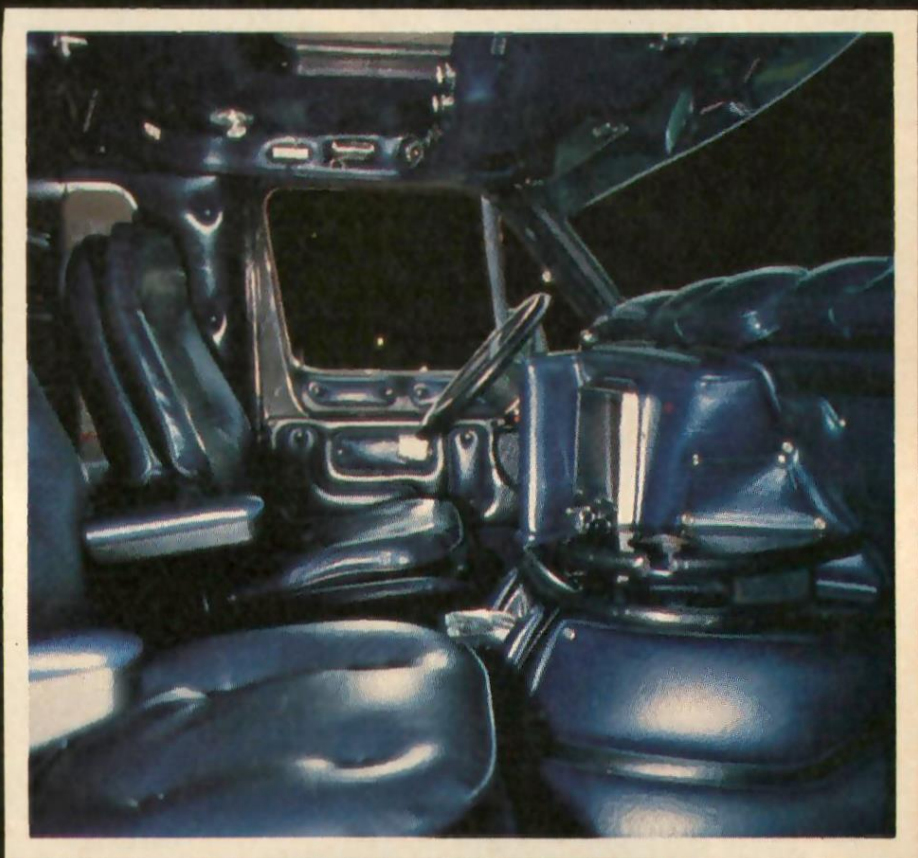
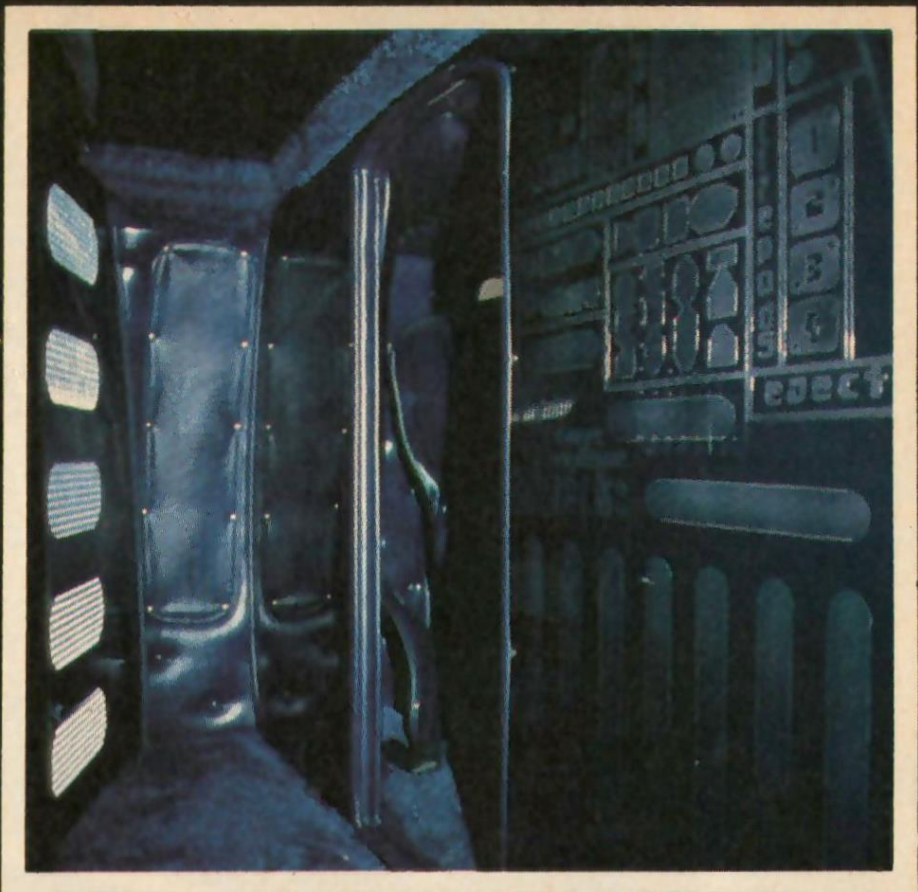
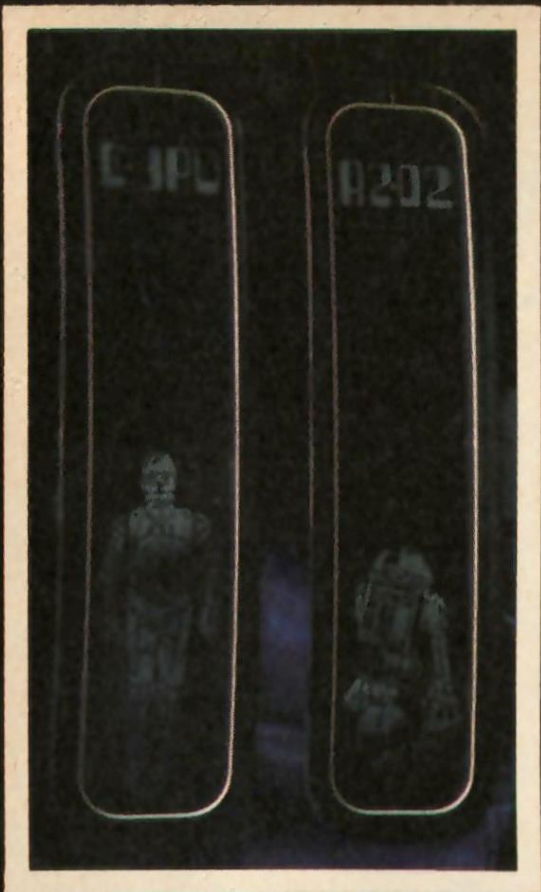
Conceived by Rubin at his El Monte, California headquarters, the project took eight months to complete. The interior Star Wars theme was executed with outstanding attention to

detail. Plexiglass panels were used to section off the cabin, forming an archway/cabin effect. Detailed artwork on the plexiglass walls gives a space age control panel look.

Le Van 8-inch bay windows were used in pairs on both sides of the rear quarter to allow greater use of interior space. Freds Belly Bands of Hawaiian Gardens, Calif., did glass etchings in each window depicting scenes from the movie. Giving total privacy to the occupants, special vinyl covers were made to snap over

the bay windows.

The passenger compartment is simple in design with a large storage cabinet, color organ and refrigerator up front and a full size couch across the rear. Because of the enclosed forward cabin, an intercom system was installed to keep passengers and driver in contact. Interior lighting was kept to a minimum and the feeling inside is cool and dark. Very dark! Deep pile royal blue carpet covers the floors and the walls are finished in deep blue padded Nauga-



hyde. All this dark blue combined with minimum use of windows keeps Star Wars passengers in their own private world:

In addition to the fantastic murals and super sano pinstriping by Freds, Imaginary Glass supplied a front spoiler and flares which were tied into the body lines with matching paint and striping. An Imaginary Glass roof spoiler was added to carry over the lines of the double Le Van bay windows. A color keyed sun visor finished off the upper portion of the customizing. Secret Citys' crew changed the front profile with the addition of a Van Trekk grille, quad headlights and Imaginary Glass hood scoop. Metal running boards were fashioned to add fuller lines to the body and bring the front and rear flares together.

In our make-believe space environ-

ment the tires never touch ground, but back home Star Wars is shod with GR50/15 T/A Radials front and LR50/15 rearward, all mounted on Western mags.

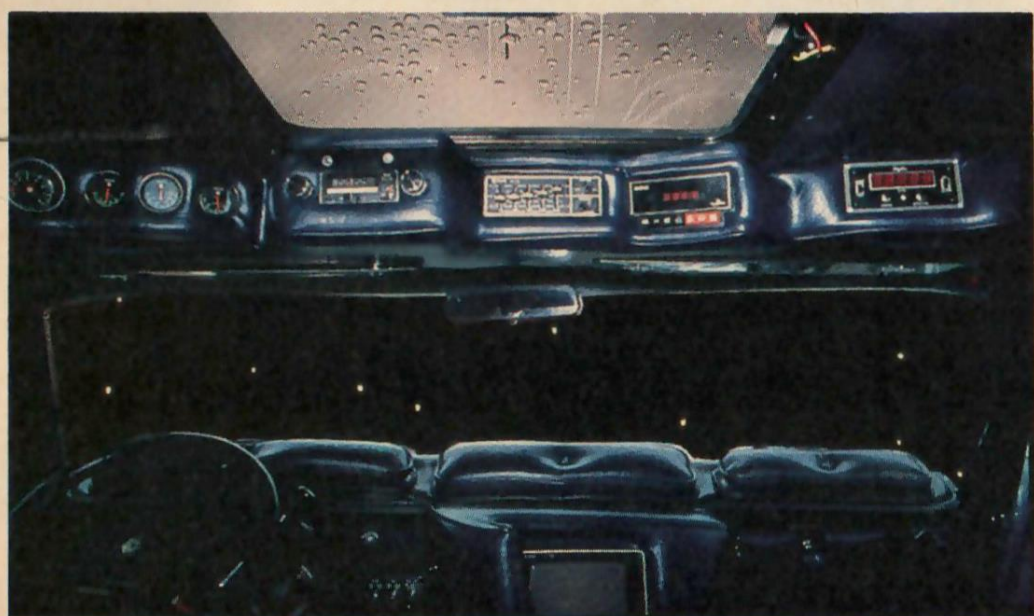
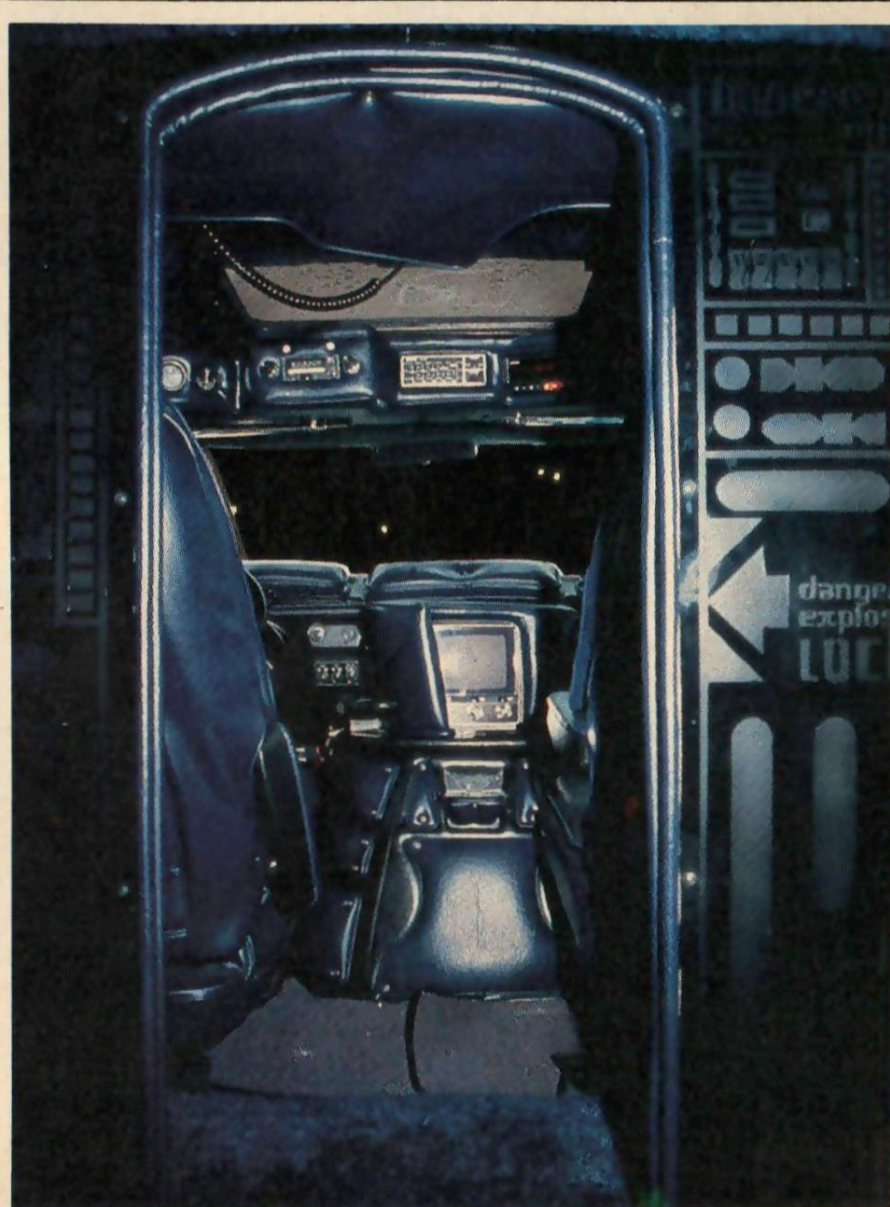
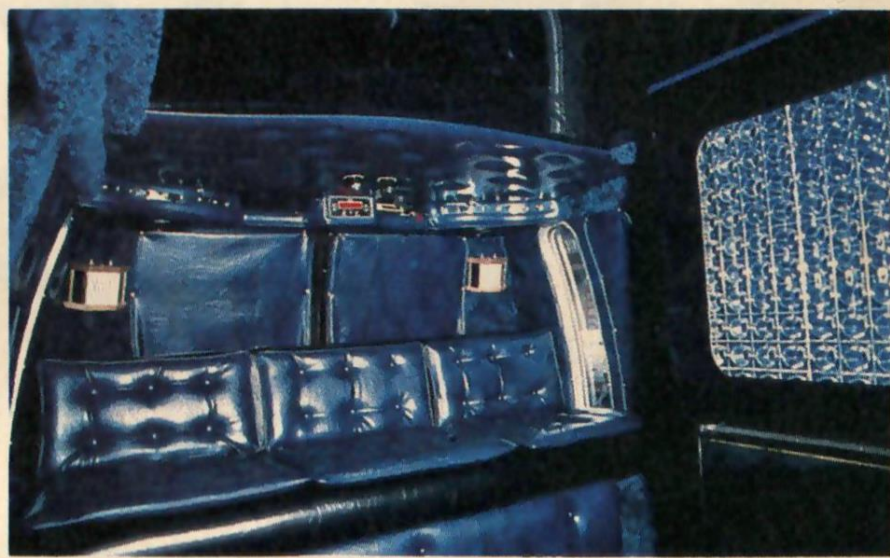
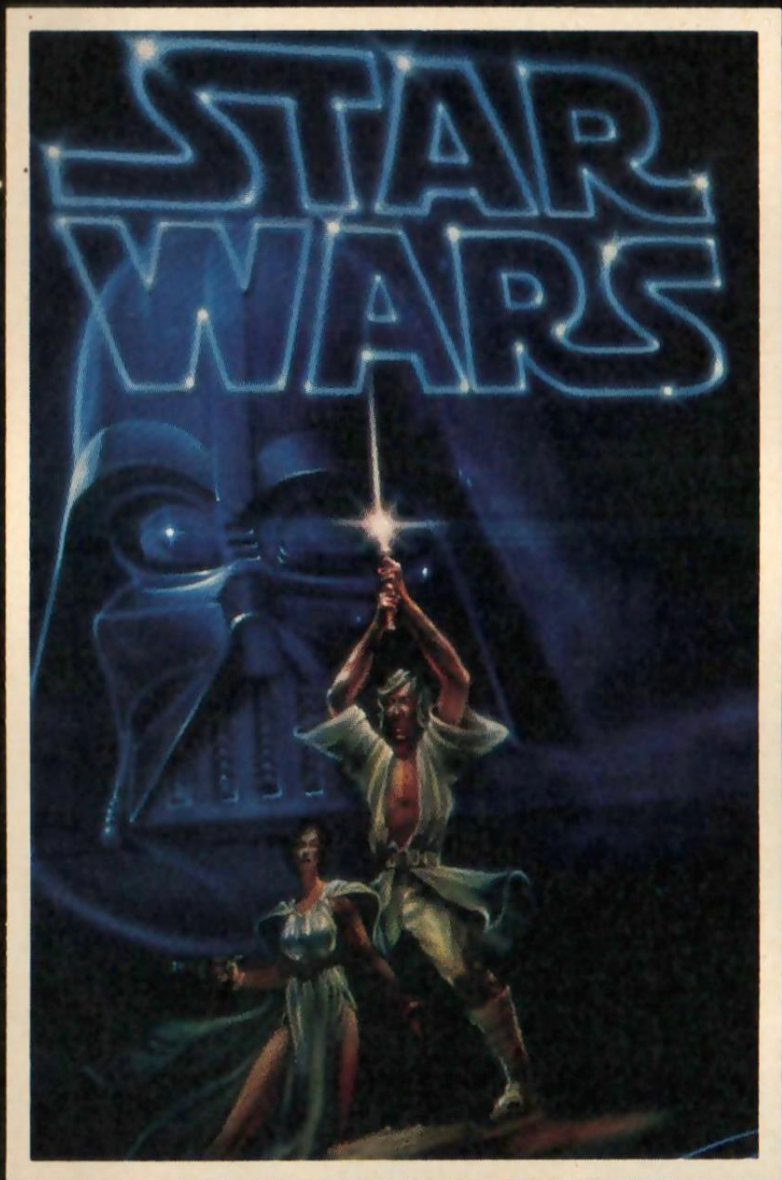
The passengers have all the room in back. Up front, the van is equipped like an Imperial Star Cruiser. The entire compartment, seats, dash, doors and console are covered in heavy tufted dark blue Naugahyde. The console itself is unique in design. It runs completely around the forward cabin with instruments front, side and behind the driver. The front passenger has his own entertainment center with stereo and B&W television. Tom's Custom in El Monte, California, designed and built the circular console. It has a gauge for every mechanical function. Also, there are lighted switches to control the stereo system, power antenna,

color organs and power sunroof.

There are two Digital LED clocks in the van. One located in the rear over the couch, and the other in the console. The sound system is hooked into a Clarion AM/FM cassette unit powering six coaxial speakers and balanced by a Clarion graphic equalizer. Fantastic sounds and lights!

Star Wars' new owner, Jim Deaton, really attracts attention wherever he goes. People see the van and right away they want a close encounter of the best kind! ●

All characters and images from the film, Star Wars, including the logo-type, are copyrighted and trademarked 1978, by 20th Century Fox Film Corp. All rights reserved.



A Behind the Scenes Look at Van Converters

By Marshall Spiegel and Dennis Adler

EDITOR'S NOTE:

CUSTOM VANS takes a close look at four of the industry's most notable van customizers. . . .

For the better part of the decade, the van conversion business has enjoyed unbelievable growth. As the market expanded, van customizers sprouted up in every corner of the nation. Some van converters failed; others barely survived. But many more have achieved uncanny success. In this section we go behind the scenes at four thriving van converters to learn their secrets to success.

CONTEMPO'S MULTIPURPOSE VANS

Planning for the Family

By Dennis Adler

There are several different facets to the vanning movement, one of which is gaining ground annually, spurred on by the "Great American Escape"—The Back-to-Nature vacation—Van Camping.

Contempo Multipurpose Vans with manufacturing facilities in Sun Valley, California, and Warren, Ohio, is geared to meet that annual need with eleven different van conversions, all designed with family vanning and camping in mind.

We say conversions rather than customizing because Contempo produces their vans on an assembly line basis similar in many ways to a large Detroit automotive plant. Everything is pre-determined, all fixtures are standardized and produced to exacting specifications through the use of templates.

Contempo Vice President Norm Jacobson told CVM that there are two different assembly procedures used at his plants. The low-top vans are run through a step-by-step assembly line construction and can be completed in one day. The bubble top vans are built in stages.

Bubble top or camping vans take four days for production and another for inspection and final pickup.

The interior used in a camping van is not as "frilly" as those in a pure



custom van, but overall it is far more functional and designed for long wear and durability.

Contempo, like many other large van converters, manufactures many of the interior components in their own shops. Cabinets are produced in mass quantities for specific models of vans. They are designed to fit the contour of each individual van for maximum usage of space. Production pieces are less costly to make and are consistent in design through the use of templates. Norm Jacobson explained that, "Production



Two of the eleven models produced by Contempo. All the conversions are designed for family recreation.



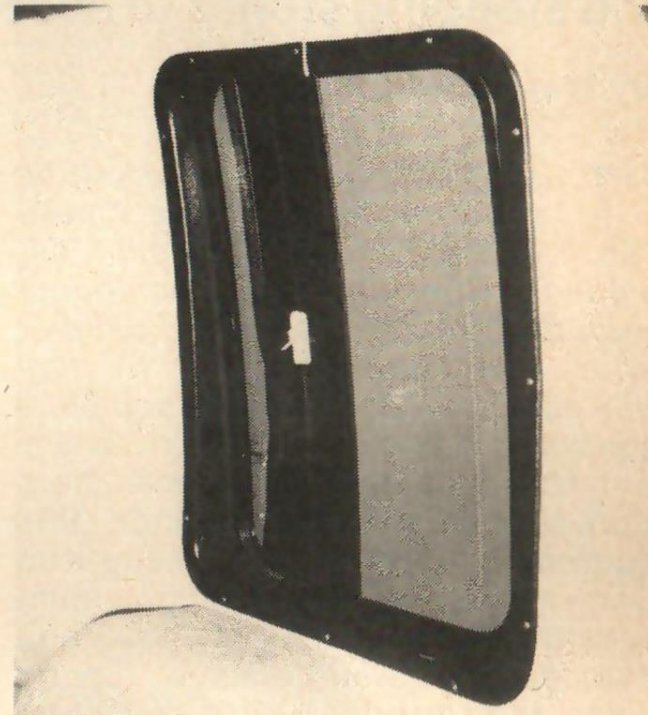
Cabinets and fixtures waiting for installation.



On the assembly line. A flat top van can be completed in one day.



Templates (in back storage shelves) are used to mass produce all wood products that go into Contempo vans. This provides a consistency in cabinet design for each Contempo model, and lower costs to the consumer.



Family safety is a factor in every Contempo design. Bay windows with a center support rib and safety glass are standard on all bay window models.

pieces are better in terms of longevity and consistency. Building 20 cabinets at the same time for the same model of van gives you a cabinet that fits every time. There is also a considerable savings which is passed along to the customer."

On the exterior, Contempo uses a formula paint design. There are over 100 combinations possible, but each one is done exactly the same way with blueprinted designs and templates.

Although each van is painted using a duplicate design, Contempo has a special process which is applied to the paint on specific models and renders a design on each van that is distinctly individual.

We have seen that mass producing vans for recreational use produces a consistently good product designed to meet the needs of out-of-doors enthusiasts and the family, yet maintaining a custom look that makes every van owner an individual. ●

On specific models a custom paint process is used to create an effect that is different on every van, even though they are all formula designs.



A Behind the Scenes Look at Van Converters

CONVERSIONS BY GERRING, INC.

**Where quality materials and careful workmanship are
the stepping stones to success. . . .**

By Marshall Spiegel

"The primary goal of Conversions by Gerring is to provide American consumers with a product designed to fulfill their expectations; through constant research, diligent effort and quality control, we feel this goal has been achieved and shall continue to be. . . ."

In the promotional material from Conversions by Gerring, Inc., this quotation is attributed to young Kim Gerring, president of the highly successful Elkhart, Indiana, van and pickup conversion company. Spend some time touring Gerring's operation. Carefully examine the finished products as they reach the final inspection area. And you will be con-

vinced that Kim Gerring actually recited that eloquent quotation or something like it. The point is that the company really means it.

Founded just five years ago, Gerring has grown to a four-building complex of 50,000 square feet under roof with 79 full-time employees. Last year, an average of 45 converted vehicles per week rolled off the assembly line to Gerring's healthy dealer network.

According to general manager Terry Marra, the formula for the company's success is simple: "We use quality material and careful workmanship and we offer enough basic floor plans so that there's one to suit any-

body's needs. . . ."

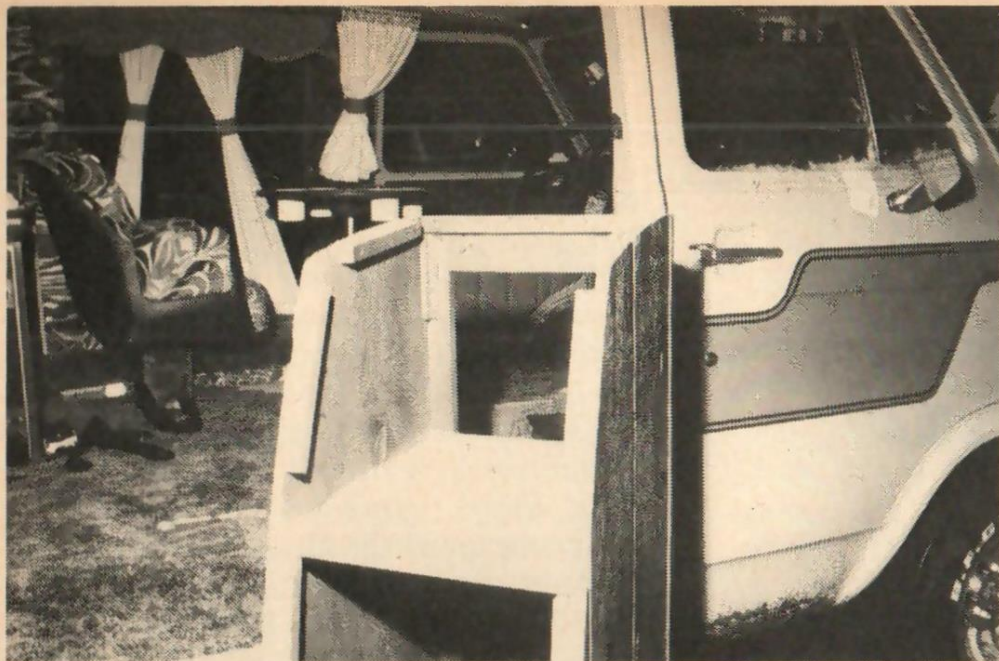
The quality materials include half-inch spruce pine for cabinetry and five-sixteenths-inch plywood panel. Flooring consists of half-inch Blandex, a quality particle board of aspen chips backed with two-and-a-half-inch fiberglass home insulation material. Cushioning material used throughout each Gerring conversion is one and two-inch high-density, fire-retardant foam. Factory wiring harnesses are replaced with overhead wiring and fuses and switches are set in an overhead console for ease of accessibility and maintenance.

There are eight basic floor plans for vans and six models for pickup conversions at Gerring. High-back bucket seats, lounge chairs, and convertible sofas—all by Kustom Fit Manufacturing Company of Pioneer, Ohio—are installed in Gerring's van conversions in an endless selection of rich, colorful fabric blends. Cabinetry in the finest woods available is custom built in Gerring's own shop. Paint schemes run the gamut from stripes to murals, all individually created in the company's in-house paint shop.

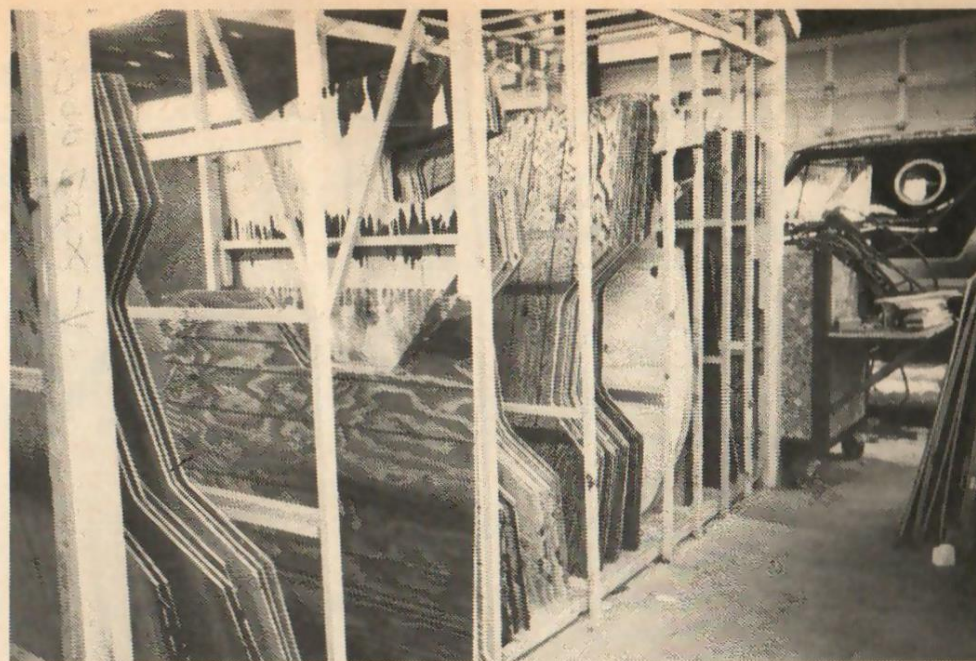
Conversion by Gerring, Inc., has grown from rather humble beginnings to become one of the most successful customizers in the business. They use quality materials. They take pride in their workmanship. And they offer a full line of conversions that obviously please their customers. For Gerring and company, that's a winning formula. ●



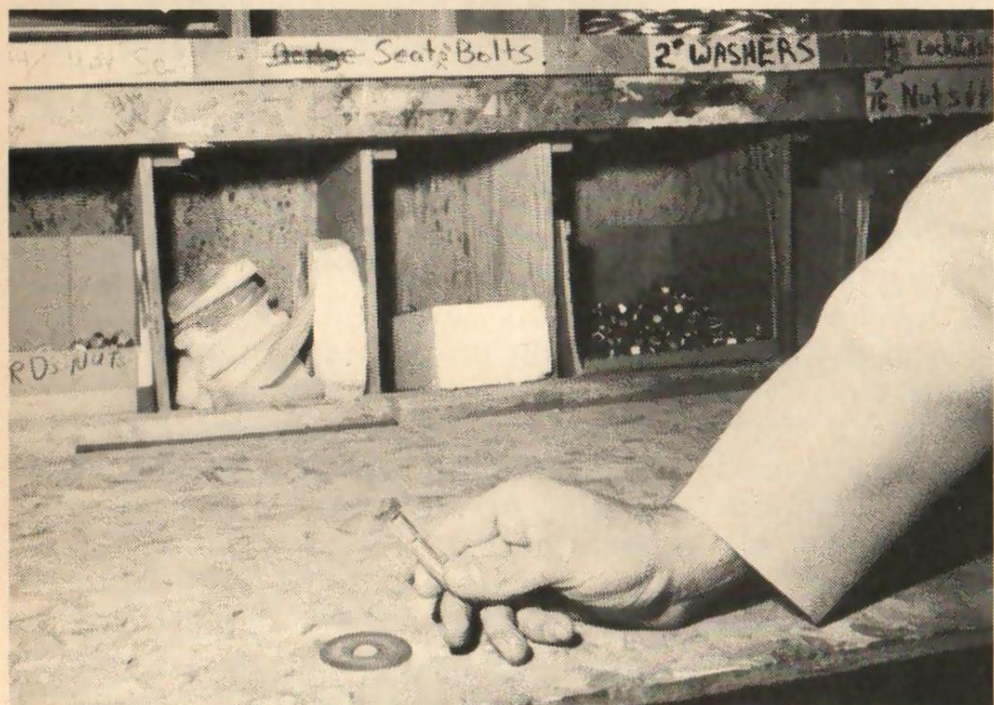
Company president Kim Gerring leaves the front office often to spot-check product quality.



Cabinetry built in the company's own carpenter shop awaits installation.



Custom cut quality woodwork is built to exacting templates at Gerring's assembly plant.



At Gerring, quality materials include the strongest seat bolts available, a hidden cost for the sake of safety.



At Gerring, quality materials in generous quantities make for strong, quiet conversions.



There's snow on the roof as another van began the trip through Gerring's conversion line last winter.

A Behind the Scenes Look at Van Converters

RECREATIONAL VANS, INC.

The world's largest, most successful van and pickup customizer still works hard at staying on top. . . .

By Marshall Spiegel

Photos by Marshall Spiegel and D.B. Star

On November 1, 1977, Recreational Vans, Inc. (RVI), of Torrance, California, celebrated its seventh anniversary by opening the company's new, ultra-modern van, truck, and off-road conversion center. The new facility, located adjacent to RVI's previous building on Crenshaw Boulevard, is a combined complex encompassing nearly 200,000 square feet under roof on 14 acres of property. In addition to administrative and corporate offices, the facility houses a manufacturing plant with eight assembly lines, a service center, a truck tire center, and a retail parts store offering one of the world's most complete and diversified lines

of quality RV parts and accessories.

Last year, RVI completed an average of 100 conversions per week for its ever-growing dealer network. The company's staff of full-time employees numbers 110. And the trappings of success include two twin-engine corporate airplanes, a company-owned and sponsored off-road racing team, and a fleet of 10 meticulously prepared show vehicles.

E.D. "Bud" Blankenship, president of RVI, sums up his company's huge success this way: "We have always worked hard to give the public quality and service. We buy and install only the best products and accessories. If we can't find components to meet

our standards, we have them fabricated to our own design. I don't let any conversion go out the door that I wouldn't want to own myself. And most importantly, we have always stood behind and guaranteed every RVI product we've sold."

RVI and its Karavan and Liberator conversions are well-recognized throughout the industry for the quality Blankenship stresses. Every conversion undergoes careful inspection at each stage of the assembly process. More than a dozen floor plans are completed on all van makes and models. Paint schemes and interior fabric selections are endless. Cabinetry is constructed of the finest Spanish oak by RVI's own master-craftsmen. The product line ranges from bubble-top mini-motor homes for serious campers to eye-popping surfer vans for younger vanners.

Locating in Southern California, the hot-bed of the early van movement, hasn't hurt RVI's rise to success. And Blankenship's faith in the van conversion business seven years ago and his willingness to struggle through its difficult infancy are yet another part of RVI's success story. Then there's the company's tireless sales effort and dedicated crew of experienced craftsmen. And there's the reputation that RVI has built throughout the years with the manufacturers in Detroit and the dealers in the Southwest. Above all, the company's success is rooted in the knowledge of the buying public that every RVI conversion is built to offer quality and value. **Continued on page 68** ●





RVI's retail store offers a wide selection of quality components.



RVI runs eight assembly lines averaging 100 conversions each week.



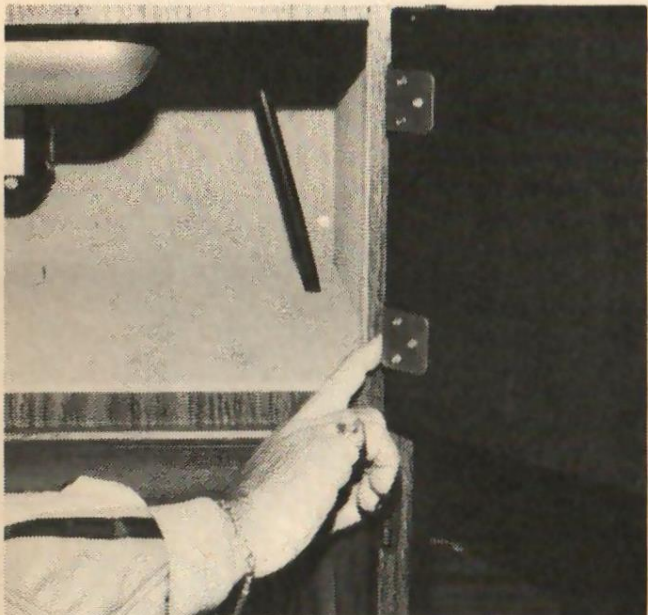
Cabinetry is constructed of the finest woods in RVI's own cabinet shop.



RVI's exclusive lock box is built from start to finish by a company craftsman.



Cabinetry is carefully inspected before final installation at RVI.



Every hinge on every RVI cabinet is checked and re-checked by the company's inspection team.



Although RVI's cabinetry is mass produced in the company's own shop, each is a fine piece of furniture.



RVI installs the best available components like seats and sofa beds by Kustom Fit of California.



Paneling is custom cut and trimmed for each conversion to assure perfect fit.



A fleet of plain jane factory vans await RVI's conversion magic.

Win one of these three Ultimate Machines customized

Firestone

SUPERSTONES SWEEPSTAKES



1st Prize
Stones Performance
Ford Econoline 150 Street Van

You can't buy 'em anywhere, but you could win one free!

There's no purchase necessary. Just fill out an entry blank at any Firestone Store or participating Firestone Dealer no later than May 31, 1978.

33 great chances to win!

Entry Forms and full details available at your participating Firestone Retailer from March 1, 1978 through May 31, 1978. No purchase required. Open to licensed drivers only. Void in Missouri and the following counties in Maryland: Allegany, Cecil, Garrett, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George, Somers-

set, Talbot—and wherever prohibited by law. Residents of Ohio *only* may receive an entry form and details by submitting a self-addressed stamped envelope to Firestone Super Stones Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 9007, Blair, Nebraska 68009. Such requests must be received by April 28, 1978.

by the editors of Hot Rod Magazine.

2nd Prize
Stones 4x4 Ford F150
Macho Machine

3rd Prize
Stones
Street Cruising
Ford Courier

Or one of 30 Super Mini-Vans.

Stones Performance Street Van: Super wide Firestone Super Sports™ tires. American Racing Equipment's "Jet" custom wheels. Easy riding Monro-Magnum 60 shocks. Tenna 8-track & AM/FM stereo. And Sharp Deluxe 40-Channel CB.

Stones 4x4 Macho Machine: Bold & gutsy Firestone All Terrain T/C's. "Wagon Wheels" by American Racing Equipment. Super sound of Tenna 8-track & AM/FM stereo. Monro-Magnum 60 shocks. Sharp Deluxe 40-Channel digital readout CB.

Stones Street Cruising Mini-Pickup: Sure handling Firestone S/S Radials.™ Sharp Deluxe 40-Channel CB with digital readout. Tenna 8-track & AM/FM stereo. Monro-Matic shocks. "Vector" wheels from American Racing Equipment.

Super Stones™

Firestone

Stones™

Several years ago rumors circulated around the automotive world that Chevrolet was working on a secret new mini van that was to be powered by a rotary engine. A few "spies" spotted clay mockups in General Motors styling and it was apparent that such a vehicle was beyond the drawing board stages. Then, with increased emphasis on fuel economy and disappointing results from GM's rotary engine research group at the Chevrolet Engineering Center in Warren, Michigan, the General Motors rotary engine project was scrapped and with it the mini-van.

In recent years however, the van has grown in popularity, and with it has come strict fuel economy requirements for cars, and more recently for trucks. The end result is that a new mini van project is in full swing at Chevrolet and is scheduled to appear as a 1980 or '81 model year product that you can buy.

According to the authoritative weekly industry newspaper *Automotive News*, the mini vans, which will be called Multi Purpose Carriers (MPC's), will feature the same front wheel drive platform that will be used to power the 1980 X-bodied compacts, the new Chevy Nova, Pontiac Phoenix, Buick Skylark and Oldsmobile Omega cars. The new mini vans will reportedly be based on a 104.9 inch wheelbase chassis (about five inches shorter than the current short

wheelbase Chevy/GMC van) and will be slightly taller than present vans at 60.2 inches. The MPC's will weigh close to 3000 pounds in a weight reduction effort designed to improve fuel economy. While it was not mentioned if GMC Division will get a version of the new mini van, it did say that both Chevrolet and Pontiac will get window van models of the MPC. Buick, as well as Chevrolet, may get sheet metal-sided cargo van models of the new front wheel drive vehicle.

Because fuel economy is a primary consideration, the engines in the MPC's will most likely be V-6's and four cylinders. General Motors spokesmen have gone on record in the past to state that they were phasing the V-8 out because of government restrictions on fuel economy. The V-6 engine will not be one of those currently utilized in General Motors cars because the existing en-

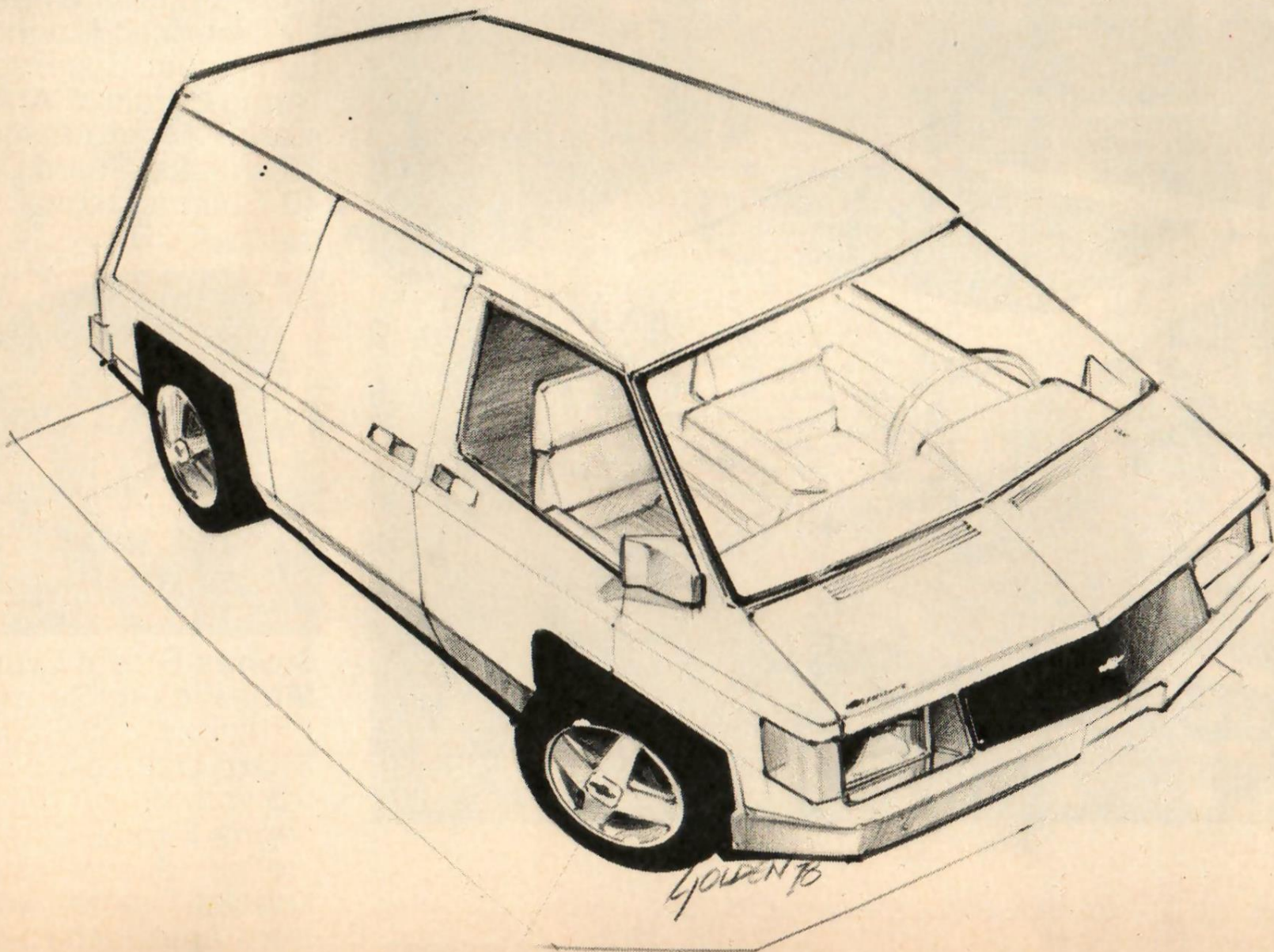
gines are too wide to be used in the transverse (engine mounted cross-ways in the chassis) configuration. A new 2.7 liter (165 cubic inch) V-6 engine is being developed right now that is a lightweight 60 degree (angle between the two banks of cylinders) unit rather than the existing 90 degree V-6's. The in-line four cylinder engines which also should be offered on the mini vans will either be 151 cubic inches or 135 cubic inches displacement. Transmission availability should include an all new Chevy-built four speed manual transmission or a three speed automatic. General Motors already has turbocharged and diesel powered products offered for sale from Buick (turbocharged V-6 Regals) and Oldsmobile (350 cubic inch V-8 diesel 88 sedans), Chevrolet and GMC (350 Olds diesel V-8 powered pickups), and while GM is currently working on V-6 and four cylinder diesel engines, it is doubtful that either turbocharged or diesel powered mini vans will be offered in 1980. Doubtful but not impossible. It is more likely that current-sized Chevrolet vans might possibly be offered with the Olds diesel V-8, but this is purely speculation at this point.

CVM's Ed Golden created his version of the Chevy front wheel drive mini van from Terry Cook's report. However, the design is based on GMC styling ideas, according to Ed.●

1980 CHEVY VAN

By Terry Cook

A 1980 Chevy Front Wheel Drive Mini Van? Chances are It's Going to Happen.



Graphics by Ed Golden

1978 CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

**CB and Stereo Buffs—
Your Van Never Had It So Good!**

What 1978 holds for the electronics field, CB and automotive stereo systems, makes 1977 look like the dark ages! If you haven't purchased your Ratchet Jaws equipment yet, hold on because here are some of the most impressive new rigs for '78 premiered at this year's Consumer Electronics Show.

The big push is on for miniaturization. By far, leading that field in compact CB is Couriers' new Galaxy 500. Nearly 60 percent of the usual electronic components have been eliminated through the use of LSI chips, PLL synthesizer and receiver IC's. What this means is a CB with a hide-away main unit only 5½ inches wide, 5¼ inches deep, 1-3/8 inches high and weighing only 1¾ pounds! The mike is anatomically shaped to fit your hand and has all the controls at your fingertips including a bright LED channel readout. With automatic noise limiter, Shunt blanking system and auto RF gain, this little beauty cranks out the modulation at 4 watts. More information and price is available at Fanon/Courier dealers, or

write directly to 990 South Fair Oaks Ave., Dept. CVM, Pasadena, CA 91105.

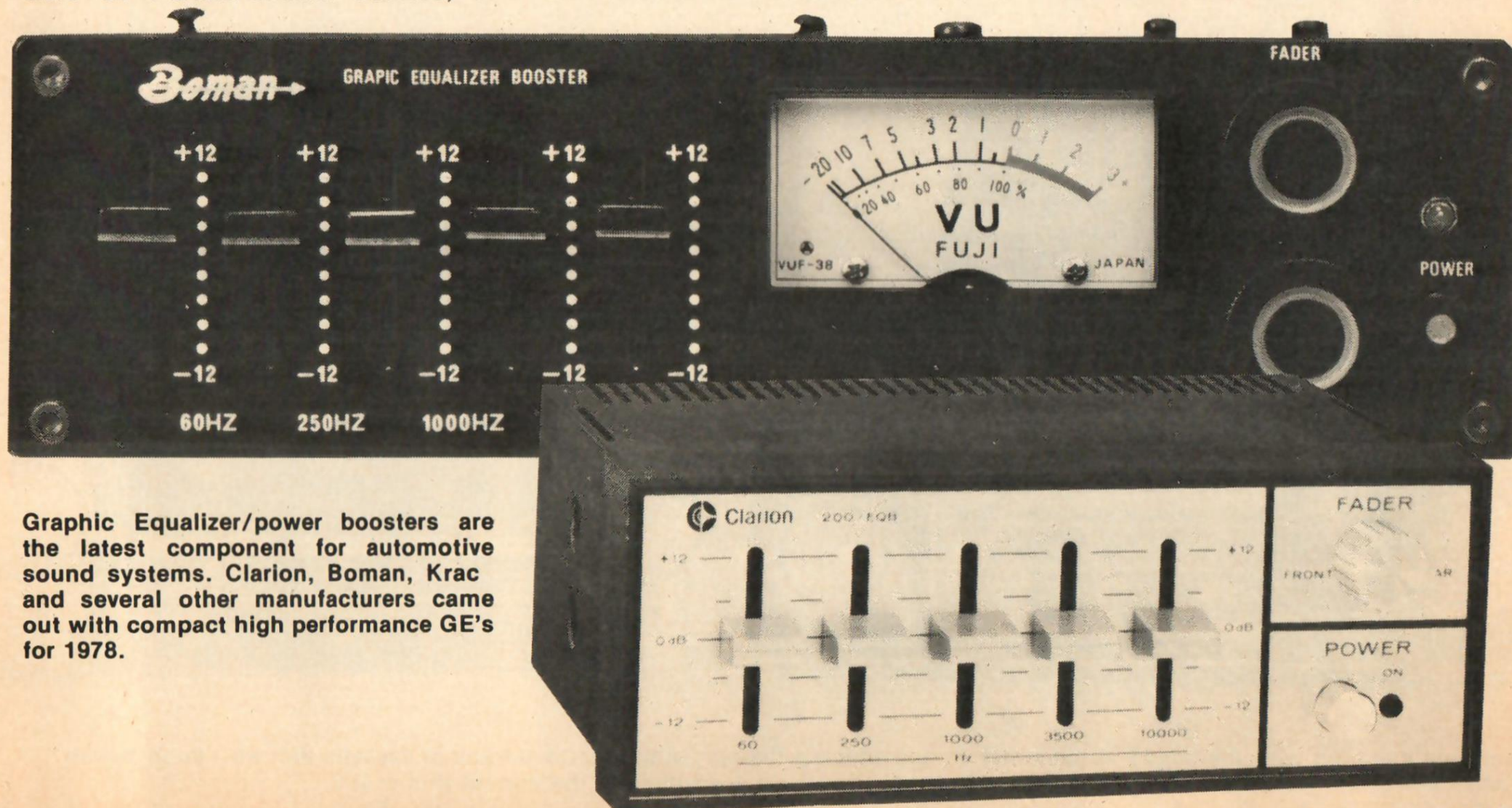
Out-a-sight. That's the new self-contained CB rig from Kraco. The company with the parrot introduced the model KCB-4060. It's totally self-contained, including all controls, rapid search channel selector, channel 9 switch, LED readout, PA and speaker, all in the compact mike. With a suggested retail of \$199.95, it's a definite consideration for that overhead console you're going to build!

Breaking away from the self-contained compacts and back to the large console or dash mount modulators, Pace introduced three new models. The most advanced unit is

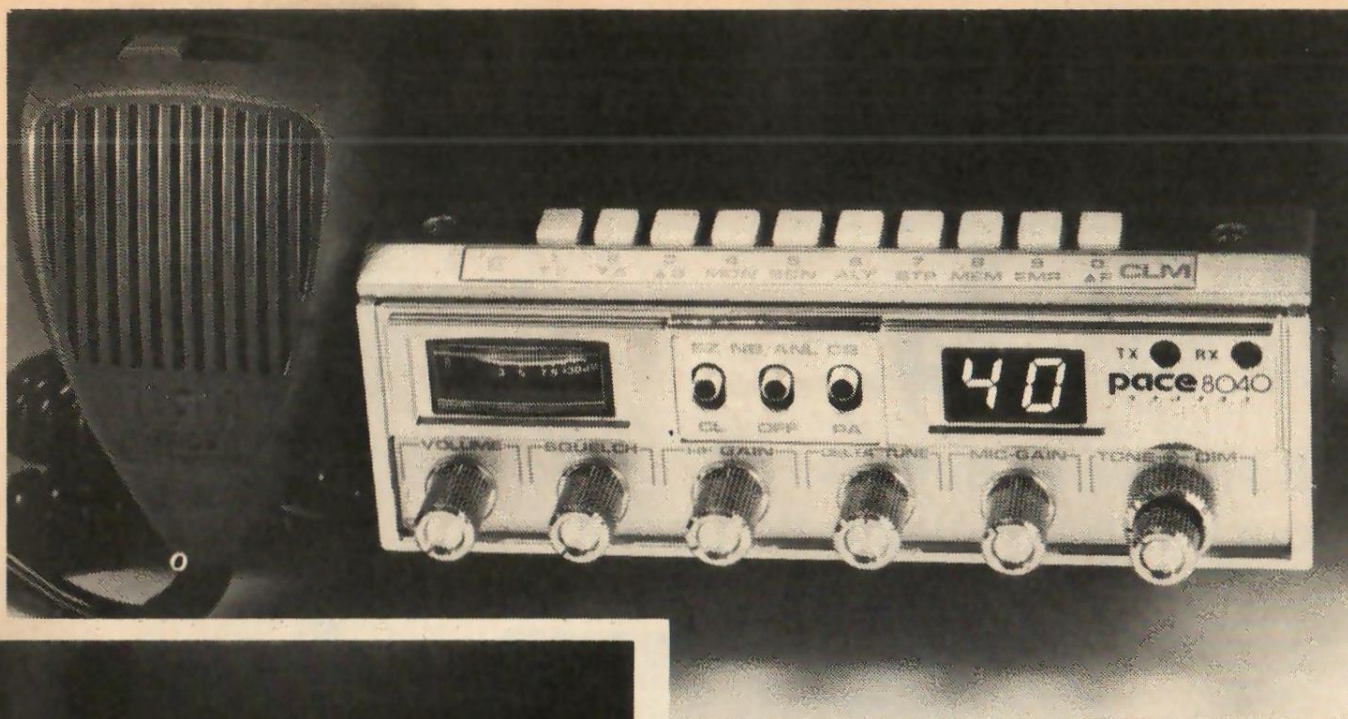


Sub-compact has to be the description for Courier's new Galaxy 500. The entire receiving unit conceals under the dash and is only 5½ inches wide, 5¼ inches deep, 1-3/8 inches high and weighs 1¾ pounds.

the 8040/40 channel mobile. This advanced design unit contains a microprocessor, which is basically a miniature computer. The computer takes instructions from the CB operator through a push-button keyboard, and converts the data into radio channel information. It controls alternate channel memory, auto-



Graphic Equalizer/power boosters are the latest component for automotive sound systems. Clarion, Boman, Kraco and several other manufacturers came out with compact high performance GE's for 1978.



Pace introduced three units with compact housings for easier installation. The model 8040 features a microprocessor which controls channel memory and selective channel scanning. All three models feature the channel selector on the mike.



matically locking on busy and clear channels, and other important functions. The mike on all three new models contains the channel selector buttons while the main unit has a big bright LED channel readout. The other Pace models, 8016 and 8020 have the same LSI (large scale integrated circuits) as the 8040 and are much shallower than older CB units, making them easier to install and requiring less rear clearance!

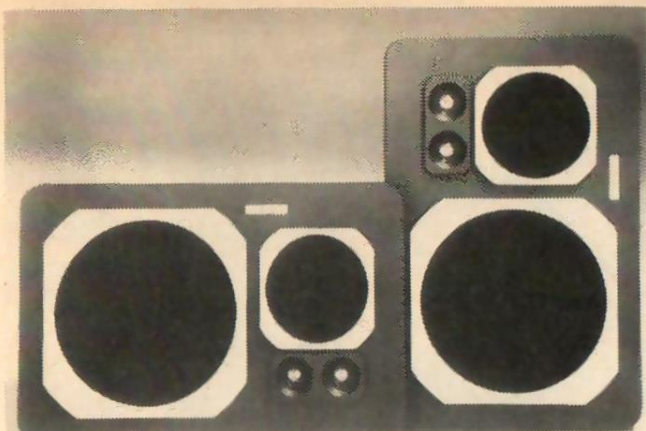
Microprocessor technology excels in SBE's Key/Com 1000. Larger than most of the CB's premiered, Key/Com had some of the most interesting features with a computer-like face, filled with 10 illuminated colored buttons from which you can instantly punch up a specific channel, or program the unit to scan all 40 channels. In addition, there are both slow and fast channel search modes (you can go through all 40 channels to one you want in a matter of seconds, or you can program the internal computer to scan up to 10 selected channels of your choice. For price and availability, write SBE Inc., Dept. CVM, 220 Airport Blvd., Watsonville, CA 95076.

With all this sophistication, all that's missing is an AM/FM tape unit built in. Coming right up. . . .

We found ourselves back at the Kraco display looking at the models KCB4090 and 4095, with AM/FM/CB 8-track and AM/FM/CB cassette, respectively. Both units are equipped with a stand-by switch, which means you can turn up the squelch to block out all but a strong signal. In the stand-by position, you can listen to the radio or a tape until an incoming



Motorola came up with the bonus for creativity by introducing the only AM/FM/CB 8-track or cassette unit with push button station selectors. Panasonic announced that they would have a similar model on the market this year.



The newest in auto sound is Kraco's model TRI-469. Featuring four speakers, three-way sound system and dual dome tweeters, this speaker delivers home stereo quality sound.

call cuts in. These little numbers run around \$300 per copy, but considering what you're getting it's a good investment.

Of course, Kraco didn't corner the market on that idea. Cobra, Midland, and several other manufacturers all came out with similar units, comparably priced. So you have an ample selection to choose from.

And surprise, surprise! All the companies that came out with AM/FM/CB tape systems had one common bond . . . manual radio tuning. Motorola, Inc. came out with the same three systems featured, plus push-button radio. Both models (8-track and cassette) feature five channel selector buttons, a stand-by switch and removable mike, to keep the honest thieves out of your box.

Now that you have all this super new equipment available, you need something to play it through. Speakers took a giant step forward as well. There seems to be two diversely new schools of thought on speaker

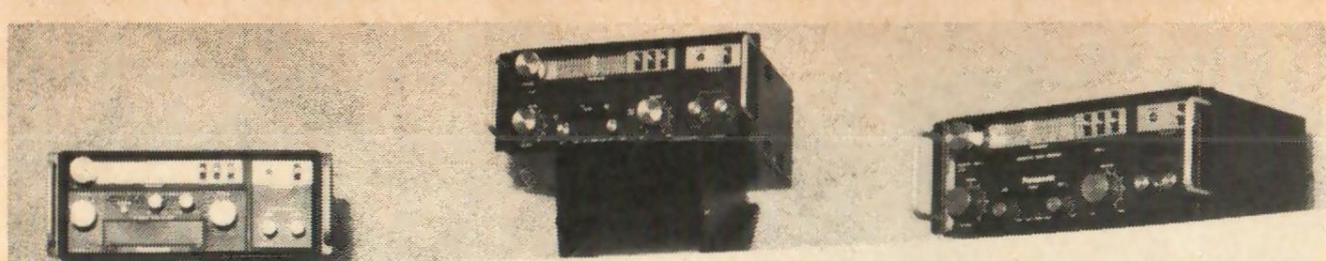


Jensen Sound Laboratories' new Separates system features six speaker components and individual mid- and high-frequency controls. The 6"x9" woofers, 3 1/2" midranges, and 2" tweeters produce true audio quality in car stereo sound reproduction.



Kraco introduced two models which feature AM/FM/CB 8-track or cassette. The Out-A-Sight from Kraco is a compact self-contained unit with everything in the mike including the speaker.





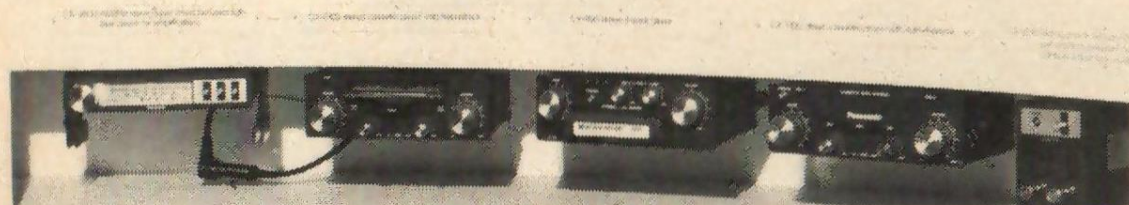
AM/FM stereo tuner

Cassette player with tape deck
AM/FM stereo tuner and power booster

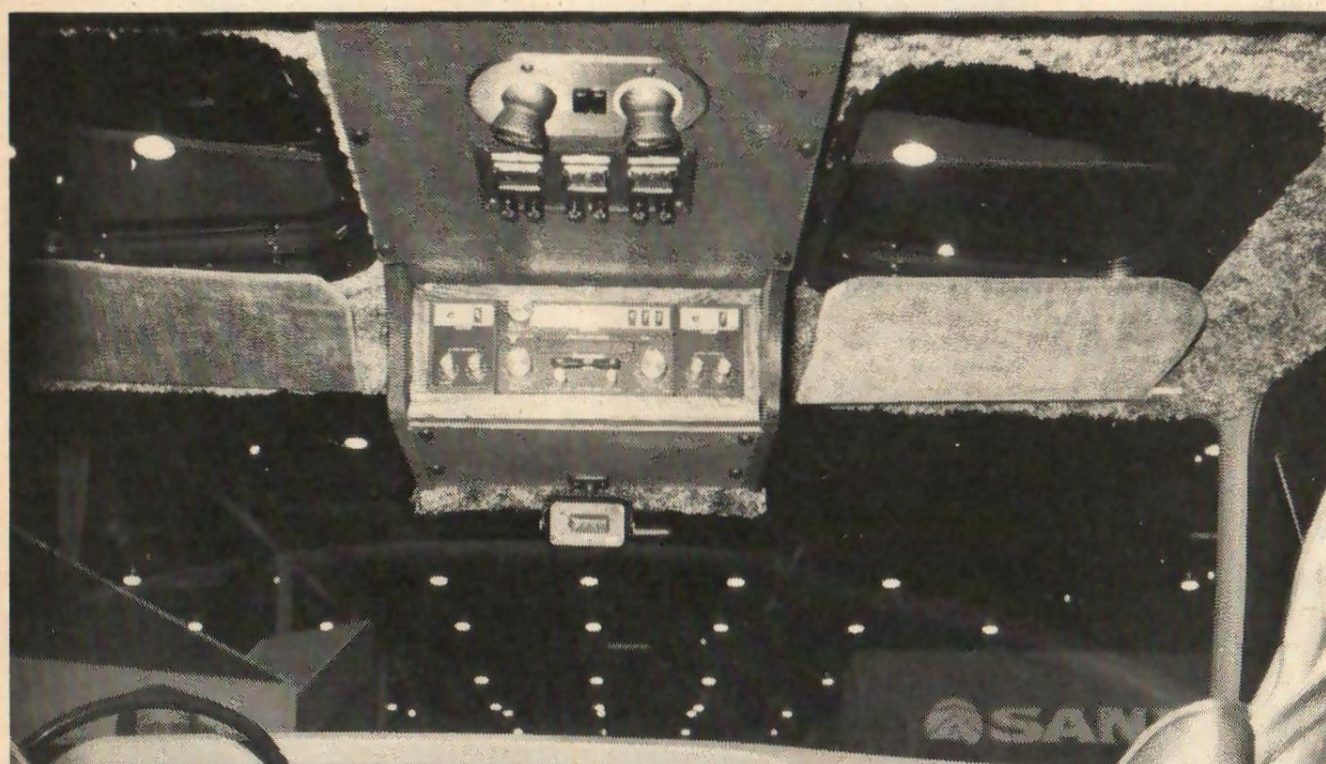
Cassette player with tape deck
AM/FM stereo tuner and power booster

Panasonic Component Systems

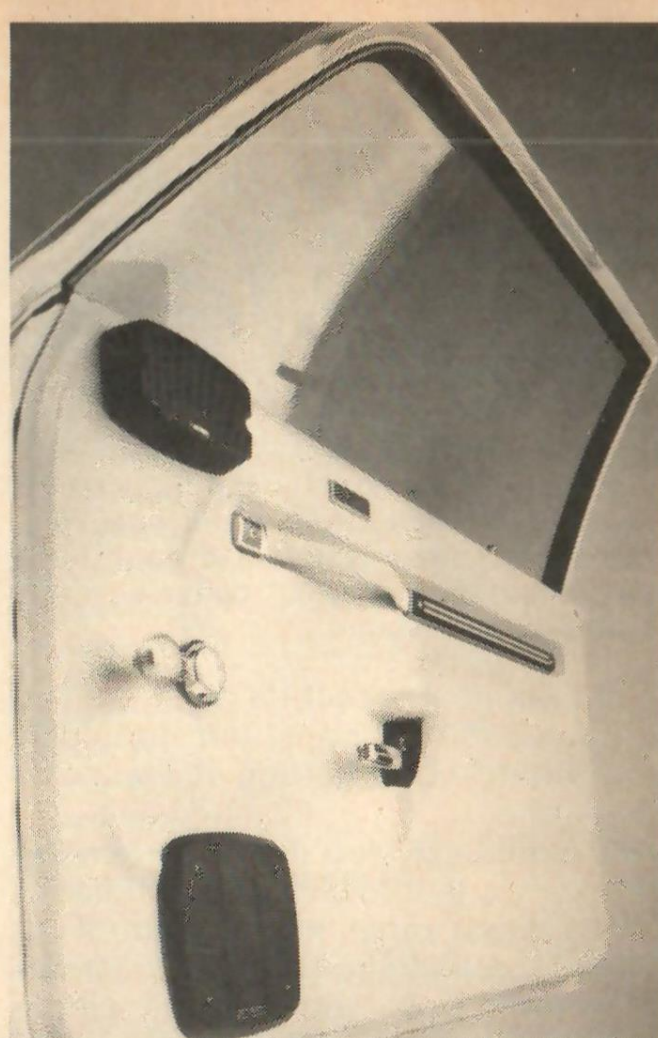
We have the components. You create the system.



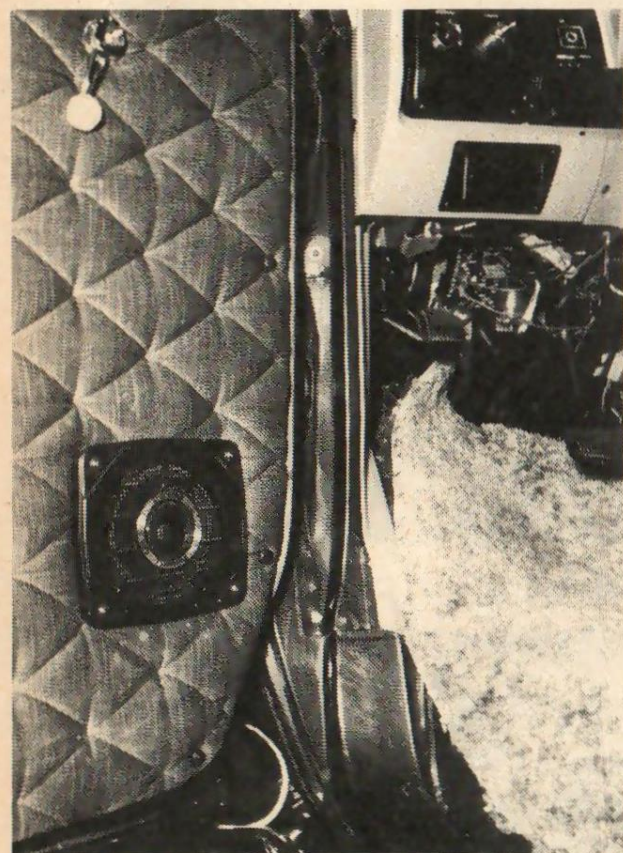
Panasonic introduced eight modular components for cars and vans.



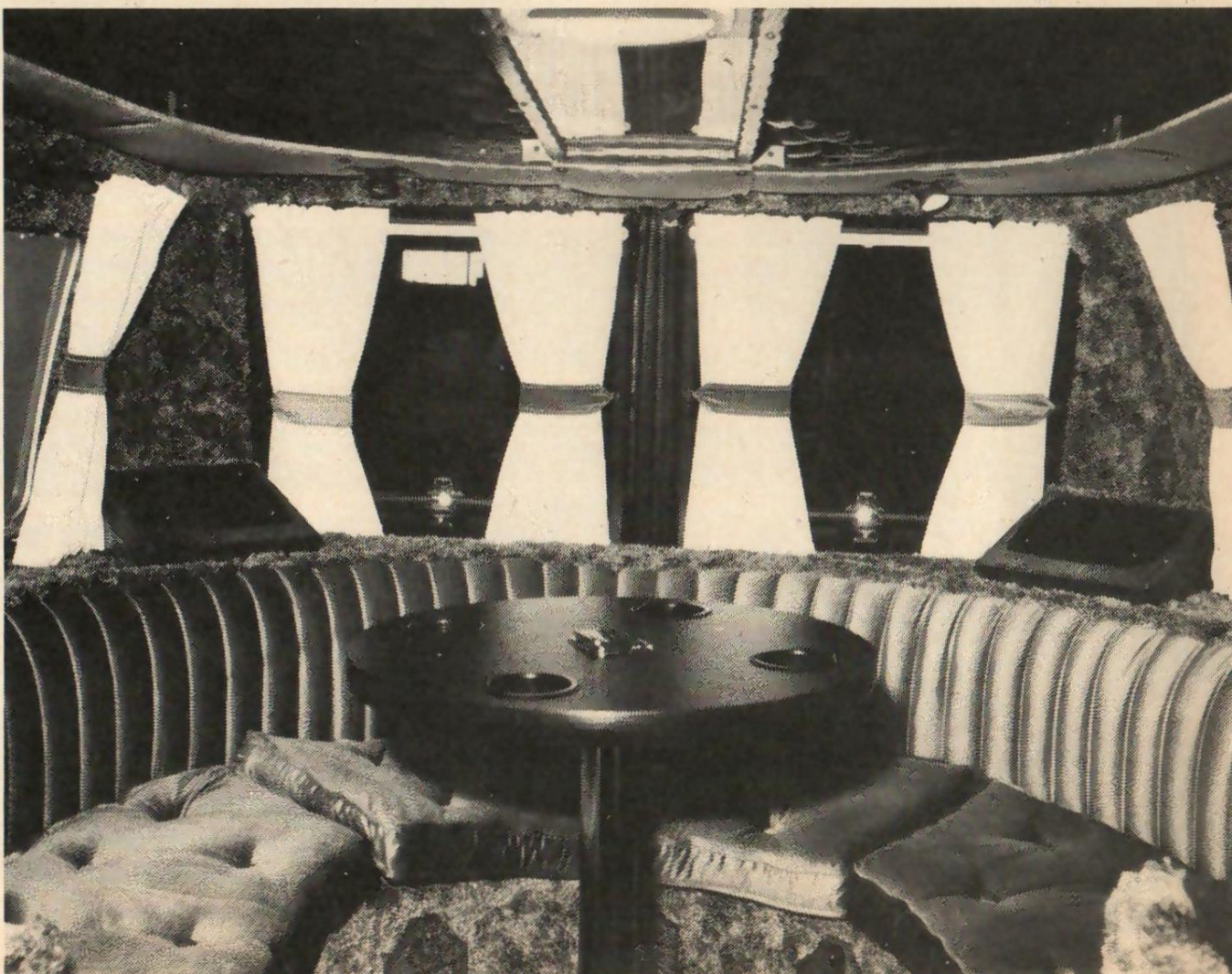
Van Royal designed this component console for Panasonic's show van. The overhead houses an AM/FM stereo tuner, cassette player, and two power boosters with individual tone controls.



Jensen Sound Laboratories has introduced a new concept in car stereo sound reproduction—a 5¼" three-way speaker system for the front door panel. Mounted low in the front car doors, the 5¼" woofers, with 20 oz. magnets, provide full, resonant bass. The mid/high-range modules are surface mounted high on the door panel. "Mid- and high-range frequencies are lost when they originate from a low speaker placement. Mounting the mid/high-range module high accommodates the directional qualities of the high- and mid-range sound waves. The 5¼" Triax® is the ultimate in door-mount three-way speaker componentry, providing a greater audio experience," commented Chuck Wendt, product manager—Jensen Sound Laboratories car stereo systems.



Speakers were placed in the doors and in custom enclosures behind the horseshoe couch. Using the power booster/tone control components renders an even range and true home stereo system sound.



designs for vans.

Boman Industries and Kraco were two of the leaders in a new speaker concept. Actually, it's not a new concept, it's an old one, but it was only found in the finest home stereo systems. Kraco and Boman have two models—one flush mount for doors and cabinets and one with an enclosure. Rather than have the conventional woofer/tweeter design in one large cone, the idea is a 6x9 unit housing two dual dome tweeters, a large woofer and a mid-range for total sound separation.

Now that Kraco, Boman, et al, have put it together, Jensen and Audiovox say to take it apart with modular design speaker systems. Audiovox features a model Comp 60 which includes, two 6½ inch 20 oz. woofers and two 3½ inch 10 oz. dome tweeters. Audiovox and Jensen (who have two 6x9 woofers, two 3 inch mid-ranges and two 2 inch tweeters combined with a loud speaker level control) say that the woofers go in the back of the van or the lower portion of doors, and the tweeters (and/or mid-ranges) go in the upper part of driver and passenger doors. The basis for their theory is the woofer (bass) flattens out and carries throughout the vehicle (cars and vans alike), while tweeters and mid-ranges are direct and should be closer to the listener. Who is right? We don't know, but in the near future CVM will test out both systems and see what the actual difference is, if there is one, since the last item we were rocked by at the CE Show changes everything!

Behold the Graphic Equalizer. Whaz-zat? Almost everyone came out with a GE in their audio line. Kraco, Clarion, and Boman Industries all share a common design. We listened to stereo systems both with and without graphic equalizers, and is there ever a difference! The GE boosts power by 30 watts RMS per channel (Boman's by 25 watts), and gives you five slide lever controls that shift + or - 12 OdB for HZ ranges 60 through 10,000. In addition, the GE's have faders for improved speaker separation and Boman's has an echo. It's like a home stereo system in your van, which brings us to the end of this wonderland tale. Panasonic: They took a home component stereo system, miniaturized it into four 12-volt units, made it modular in design, and Van Royal, Inc., Nappanee, Indiana built Panasonic's Component Stereo System Van. The system will be available by the time you read this story.

So, grab your wallet, checkbook, or cash stash and head into the 1978 auto stereo and CB market wide eyed!

THE LAST THING YOU WANT IS A CAR WAX THAT SCRATCHES.



THE FIRST THING YOU WANT IS SPRINT.

SPRINT IS ABSOLUTELY
NON-ABRASIVE. SO IT
WON'T MAR THAT
BEAUTIFUL PAINT JOB
WHILE YOU'RE GETTING
THE GREAT SHINE YOU WANT.

DON'T TAKE A CHANCE
WITH YOUR FINISH. USE
NO-BUFFING SPRINT.





SWAMP RUNNER

The Louisiana Look in Customizing
Story and photos by Robert Tureaud

Just when we thought that there's nothing new under the van sun, along comes the Louisiana look. The Louisiana look borrows from both the art world and the contemporary van scene. It blends them into an art form that is at once simple and elegant. Striking, yet built for wear. In a word—practical.

From the art world comes the pallet knife technique used by artists to

create a textured effect on canvas. In the Louisiana look, it's done on sheet metal.

From a contemporary van standpoint, *Swamp Runner* has an uncluttered look. No candy-apples here. Instead, colors are basic non-metallics that can be matched anywhere.

Swamp Runner is owned by Guy Coniglio of Chalmette, Louisiana.

Guy's van began life as one of those semi-custom Dodge Tradesman 100's sold off the dealer's showroom floor. This one came with an orange exterior and blue interior based on a heart theme. Guy changed things around to suit his personal tastes.

He wheeled over to Louisiana Auto Repairs and had them sand the future *Swamp Runner* down to the metal. They applied four coats of white primer over the basic body and finished up with four coats of General Motors gunmetal gray enamel. To accent the body, Oldsmobile blue bands were added down both sides and over the hood.

It's in the treatment of the mural that the Louisiana look ascends to new heights. Guy commissioned local artist R.L. Jenks for this phase of the work. His only guidelines were that the mural should be a Louisiana bayou scene and include an alligator and a turtle. Jenks took a healthy swig from his bottle of Thunderbird and mixed up a batch of MD-3 body filler. Many batches of MD-3 and several bottles of Thunderbird later,

the imaginary swamp scene—with an alligator and a turtle—was complete. Only in New Orleans, folks.

The rest of the exterior follows contemporary van practice. The front 6½x15-inch Appliance mags are shod with G78-15 Grant Master skins. G70-15 Coopers on 7x15-inch Appliances bring up the rear. There's also a fiberglass air dam and fender flares, front and rear. The rear flares were narrowed slightly from their original width.

The interior still carries the love theme. Guy left the paneling, insulation, and heart shaped bulkhead intact and concentrated on personalizing the carpeting and accessories. He scrapped the blue wall and floor carpeting, and replaced it with

shaggy royal-blue dog hair. The ceiling is done the same way, only in silver-gray. It's purr-fectly furry and definitely off limits to hay fever sufferers.

Vanners have to have music wherever they go and *Swamp Runner* has sound to spare. The dash mounted Motorola AM/FM eight-track stereo powers six speakers. Two are situated back in the rear door panels, two more are under the tool locker, with a third pair in the cab above the doors. Also overhead is a Johnson 123-A CB to keep the pilot tuned to the latest highway conditions.

Another creature comfort is a wall mounted nine-inch Hitachi B&W TV with its own powerpack.

Guy hauls around a lot of tools and

sporting gear so he needed a hidden storage area. He built a padded tool locker that doubles as a bench seat. It's covered with shaggy royal-blue dog hair too. In addition to the stereo speakers, the tool locker also houses a weather band radio.

To keep all this finery in its place, namely, inside the van, Guy installed an electronic alarm system. It's wired to a set of triple Maserati air horns and can be described as loud.

That's *Swamp Runner* and the Louisiana look. Guy Coniglio has taken some old familiar materials and techniques, and turned them into something new, exciting, and intensely personal, yet eminently practical. A fun van for everyday use!



It takes a second look, but passersby can't help wanting to touch *Swamp Runner's* textured bayou murals.



Louisiana artist R.L. Jenks created the textured bayou murals for *Swamp Runner*.



Guy's dash is also finished in dog hair carpet. Woof!



Achoo! Hayfever sufferers beware! *Swamp Runner's* entire interior is finished off with royal-blue and silver dog hair carpet.



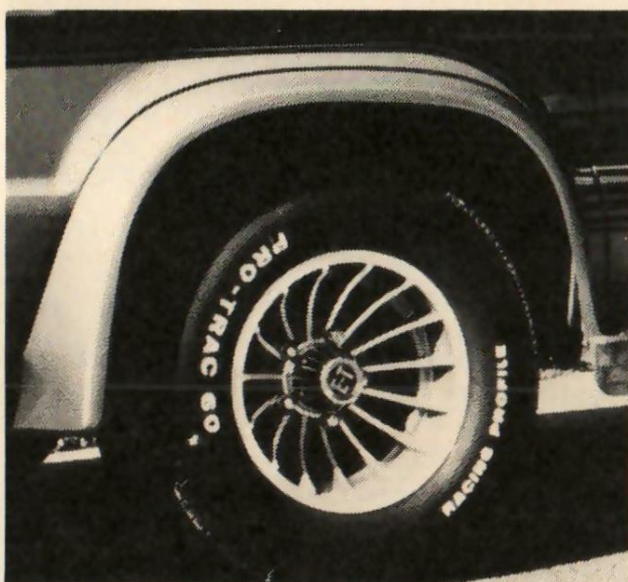
Paint Your Wagon

By Carl Caiati

Wheel Cosmetics—Paint

Without a doubt, wheels properly selected do much to glorify and enhance the outer aesthetics of the custom or even the simpler all around street van. Mag wheels originally designed for the hot street machine set-up have been assimilated by the van set with some of the newer offerings designed with vans in mind. Wheels by themselves add a necessary custom touch as basic additives. Recently, particularly in custom circles, much attention is being given to additive wheel face-lifting in the form of paint. If you notice with most custom mags they have both highly polished and rough matte surfacing, with the polishing serving as highlight facets of the wheel. The polishing is confined usually to the spoke area facing and the outer rim circle. The in-between and rim drum area is usually left in a rough state. The combined effects of the polished and rough detailing make the wheels stand out with the built in contrasts of the metal. In some mags the entire spoke area is rough for a differing effect. These rough areas are ideal for painting. First, the added inclusion of color adds another cosmetic factor to the wheel enhancing its overall appearance; second, these rough surfaced areas are ideal for accepting and retaining paint.

Mag wheels are easily painted, however a slightly different preparatory approach is necessary prior to



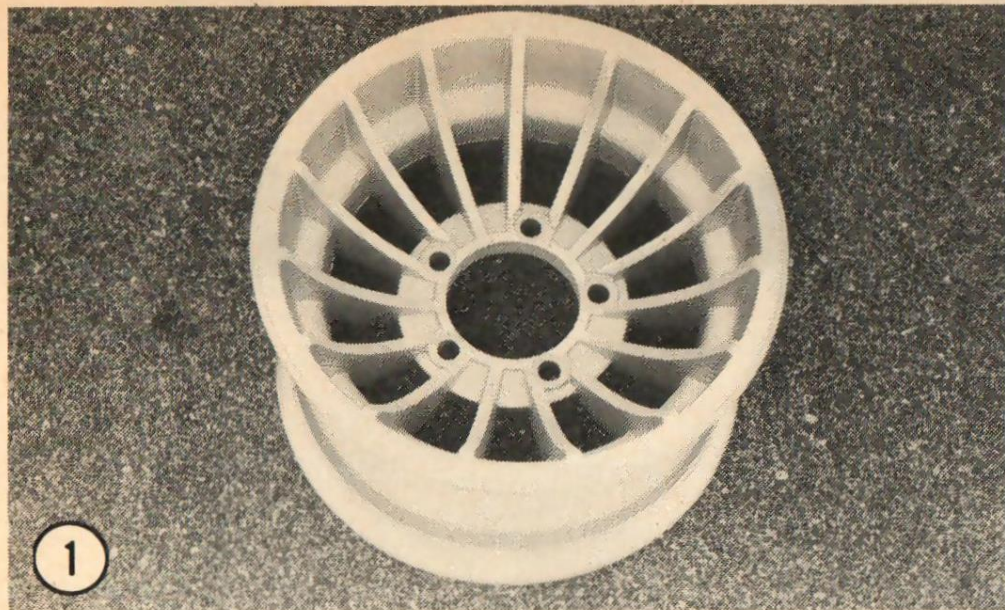
spraying to insure proper corrosion resistance and paint adhesion. First we must analyze the nature of the metal involved. So called mag wheels are not always in reality true "mag" wheels. In virtually all instances they are manufactured of aluminum. Preparing aluminum and aluminized surfaces for paint differs from the standard sheet metal prepping procedures. Standard metal primer surfacers do not always work well with aluminum and the adhesion qualities are not as strong or permanent as with sheet metal for which they were formulated. Zinc chromate primers specially designed for aluminum should be utilized in most cases. Standard automotive lacquers and enamels may then be applied over the zinc chromate in the normal fashion.

Another more simple and foolproof

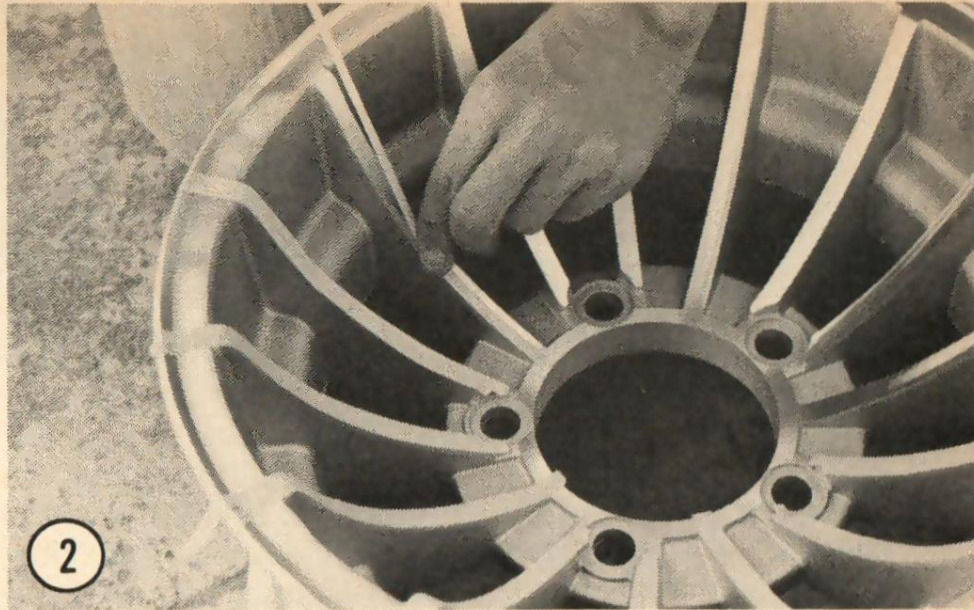
method I found is the one described here. It is a method by which the aluminum surfaces are washed, then etched and prepped with a solution called Alodine 1001 which also contains a corrosion inhibitor. No priming is necessary; the two step Alodine preparation suffices to properly prepare the surfaces for painting.

PROCEDURE

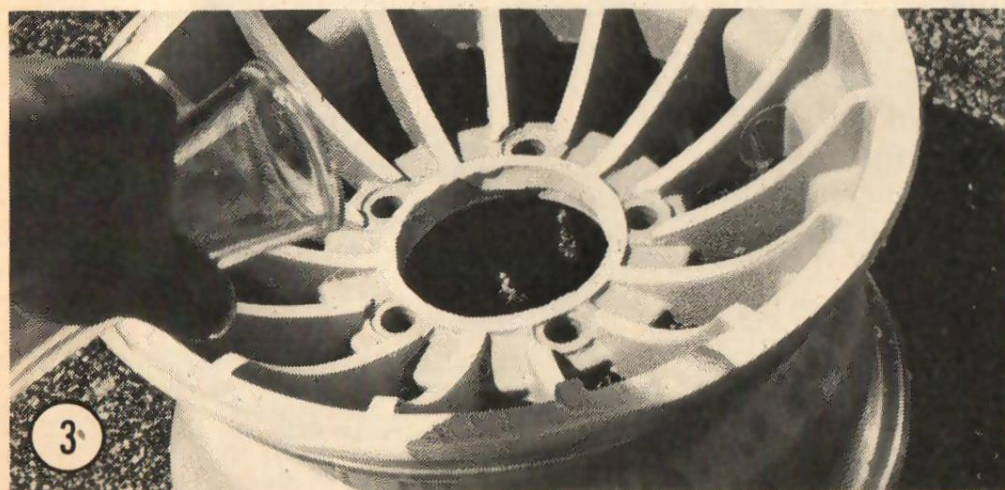
For starters, mask off all the polished (shiny) areas of the wheel. Here we paint the new E.T. radial spoke mag and in this approach all the spoke surfaces and outer rim ring are masked off with masking tape. This is done to protect the polished surfaces from the action of the Alodine etching which will mottle and discolor the highly polished aluminum on contact. This is probably the most time consuming and tedious aspect of the prepping operation. Once all the tape is firmly affixed, the wheels are washed down with Alumaprep to remove all dirt, grime and oily films. The Alumaprep is thinned down—one part Alumaprep to one part water—to achieve a working solution. The Alumaprep solution may be applied by pouring on, by brush or even swabbed on with a clean saturated rag. After liberal application the Alumaprep is washed off and the cleaned surfaces dried. Now the surface is ready for the Alodine treatment. In a container, preferably plastic, make up a solu-



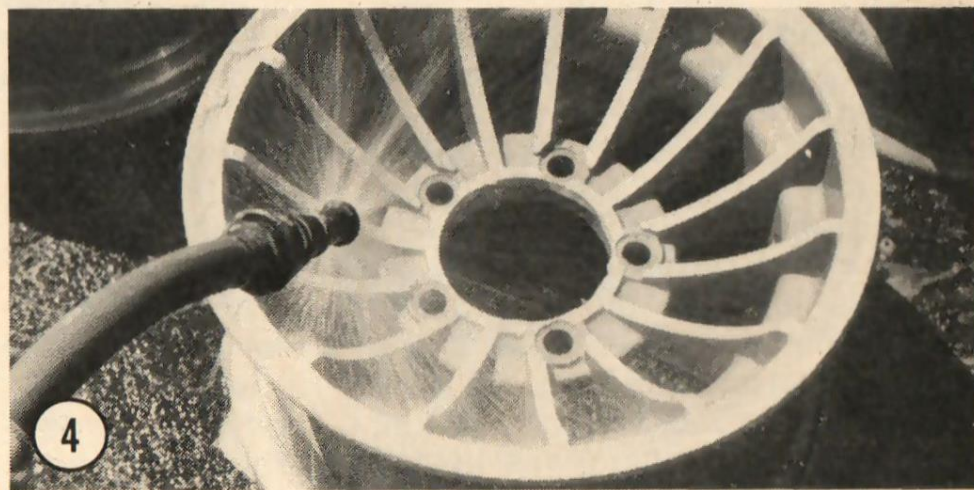
1
Wheels such as these E.T. Radial Spoke mags are ideally suited to cosmetic painting.



2
Spoke portions are masked off with tape. The polished facets of the wheel should be left intact.



3
Prior to Alodine treatment the wheels are washed down with Alumaprep.



4
The Alumaprep is washed down with cold water.



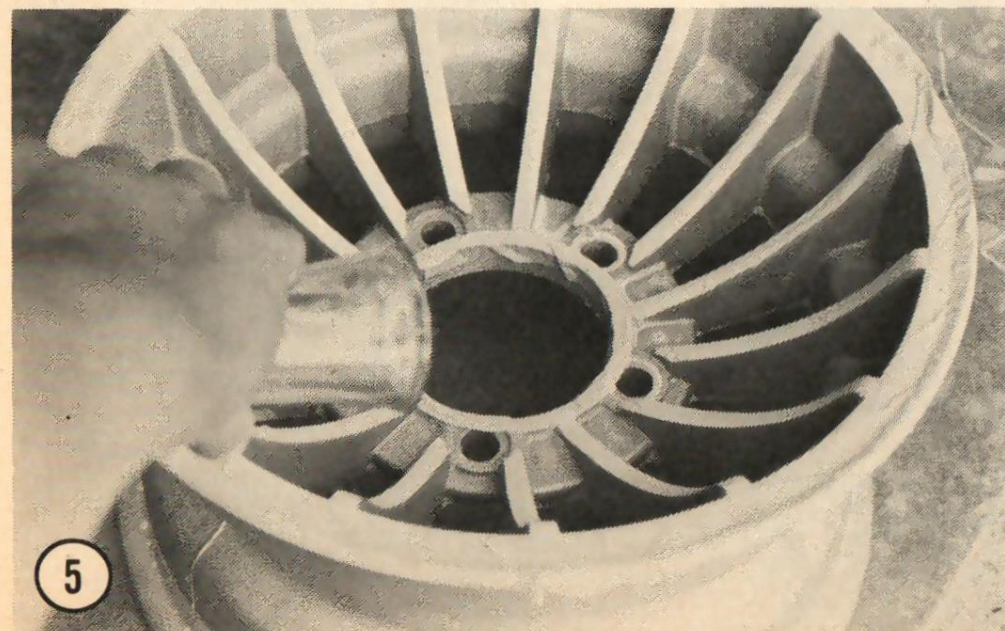
Alumaprep and Alodine 1001 may be obtained at most auto paint suppliers.

tion consisting of one part Alodine and one part water, adding the Alodine to the water. With the mixed Alodine-water solution, liberally brush or swap the Alumaprepped surfaces. We used a simple pour-on washdown method. Allow the solution to remain on for two to five minutes so it can work and etch the surface. Then flush the Alodine solution off with cold water or a saturated rag occasionally wrung out in water. Allow surfaces to dry completely. Now you are ready to paint.

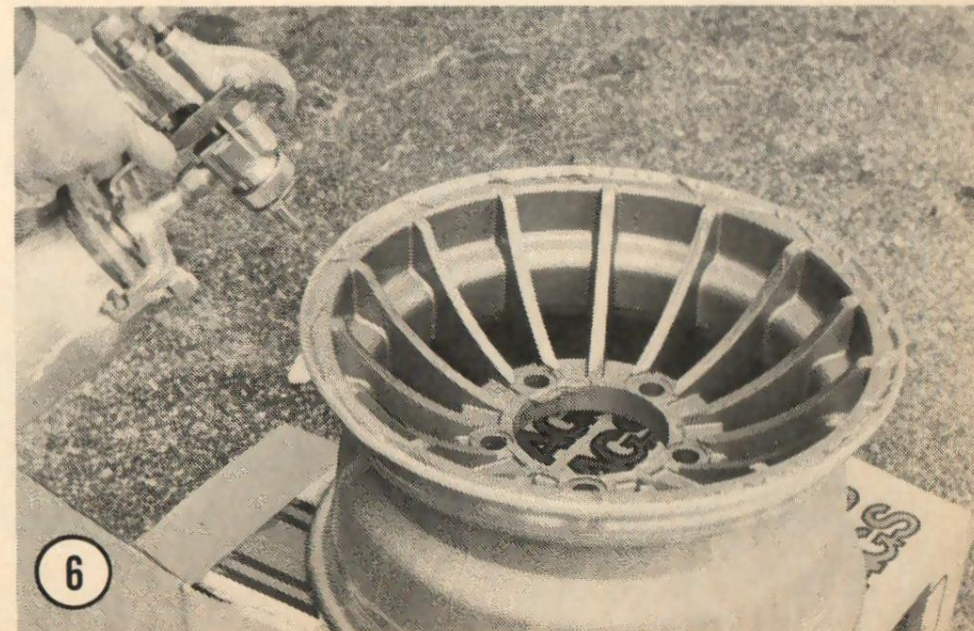
Choice of paint is left up to the individual. Lacquers and enamels are both effective; I prefer and recommend the use of acrylic enamel or Imron exclusively for wheels. These

catalyzed, polyurethane type paints are impervious to dirt, stone chips and hold up best. If you choose acrylic enamel, follow the directions supplied with the brand chosen for best results. Acrylic enamel should be sprayed on and built up slowly or it will tend to run. It can be used with or without a catalyst in some cases, but catalyzing will afford a higher gloss as well as a more hardened, protective surface. Allow a half hour setting period between coats and a 24 hour full dry period before mounting the wheels.

Painted wheels will do much to upgrade the appearance of your wagon and the procedure is easy, even for the duffer. ●



5
In the same manner as the Alumaprep, the Alodine solution is applied. Allow to stand up to five minutes, then wash off and dry wheels.



6
Paint is then mixed and sprayed on as shown with a production spray gun. Spray evenly and in a circular motion.

LOGAN'S RUN

1972 Chevy Van Shares Billing on MGM Series

By Dennis Adler and Dean Jeffries

The most radical van ever built has never entered a custom show, has never seen a Van-In, or won a van show trophy, yet millions of Americans recognize it on sight. It is a 1972 Chevy van specially designed and built by Dean Jeffries for the MGM television series "Logan's Run."

Costing over \$30,000 the Solar Craft has some unique modifications which allow it to cover terrain both on and off road. The front and rear suspension was reworked with special hydraulic aircraft landing gear units added to all four wheels which raise and lower the entire body. Special shocks were built by Gabriel for off road running and the stock 350 Chevy engine was beefed up with custom headers and exhaust system designed by Cragar.

MGM wanted a fully operating vehicle, so every mechanical detail had to be perfect. With shooting schedules so exacting, mechanical dependability was a must. The power plant was assisted with the addition of an

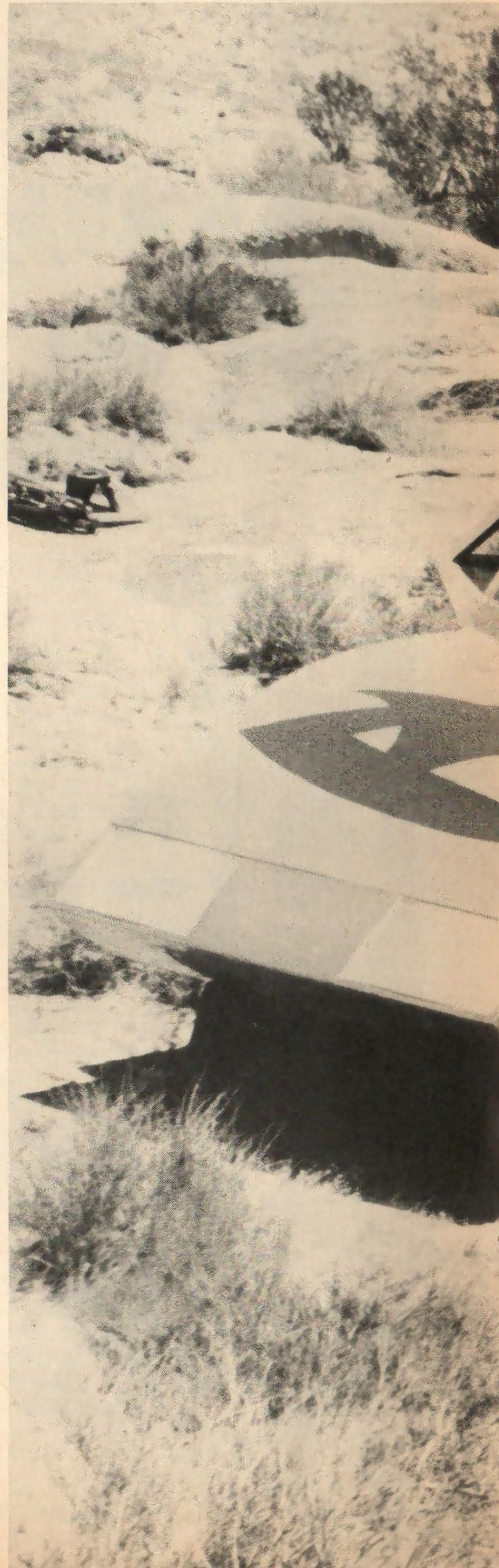
Edelbrock manifold, Mallory ignition, B&M hydro and Hayden transmission cooler. All the instruments were specially designed by Stewart-Warner Co. Six KC's were installed for headlights and Goodyear furnished the rubber with heavy duty on and off road tires. Jeffries designed the interior with room for four to eight people (camera crews count too) and his futuristic driver's compartment was finished off with dual control steering wheels from Moon Wheel Discs.

Although the Solar Craft is large (21 feet long, 8 feet wide and 9 feet tall), it weighs only 3000 pounds. The body is made completely of box tubing and sheet metal. It's not trick photography when you see the Solar Craft tearing across your TV screen at high speeds. Jeffries' spaced out Chevy van can hit 90 mph.

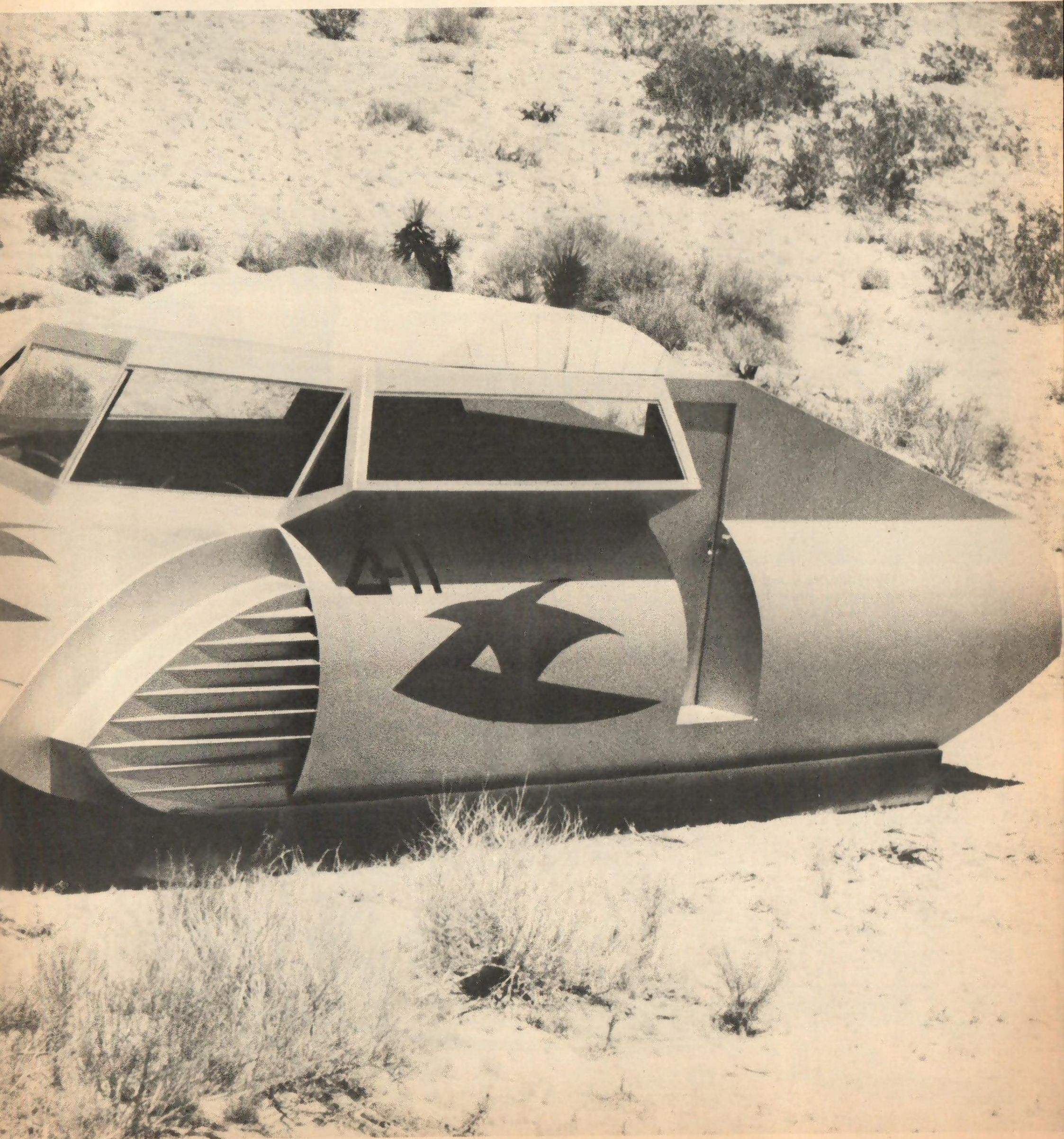
The Solar Craft isn't exactly street legal (no rear view mirror?) but in Logan's Run there are no smokies cruising the highway. ●

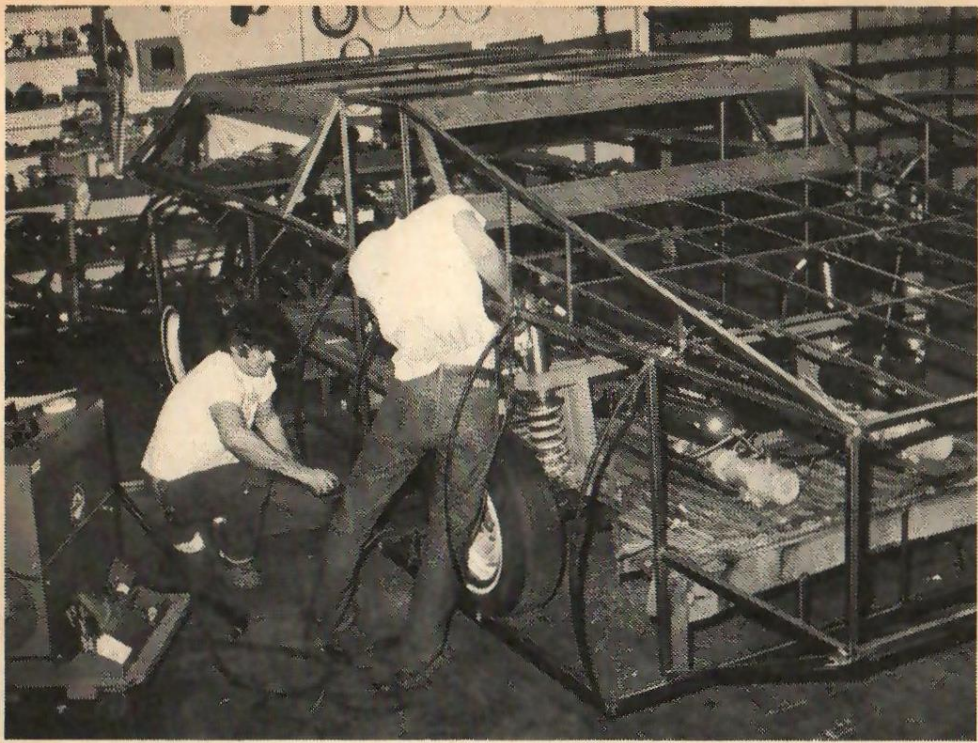


On the Set. Jeffries' spaced-out van zooms past the cameras on the set of Logan's Run.

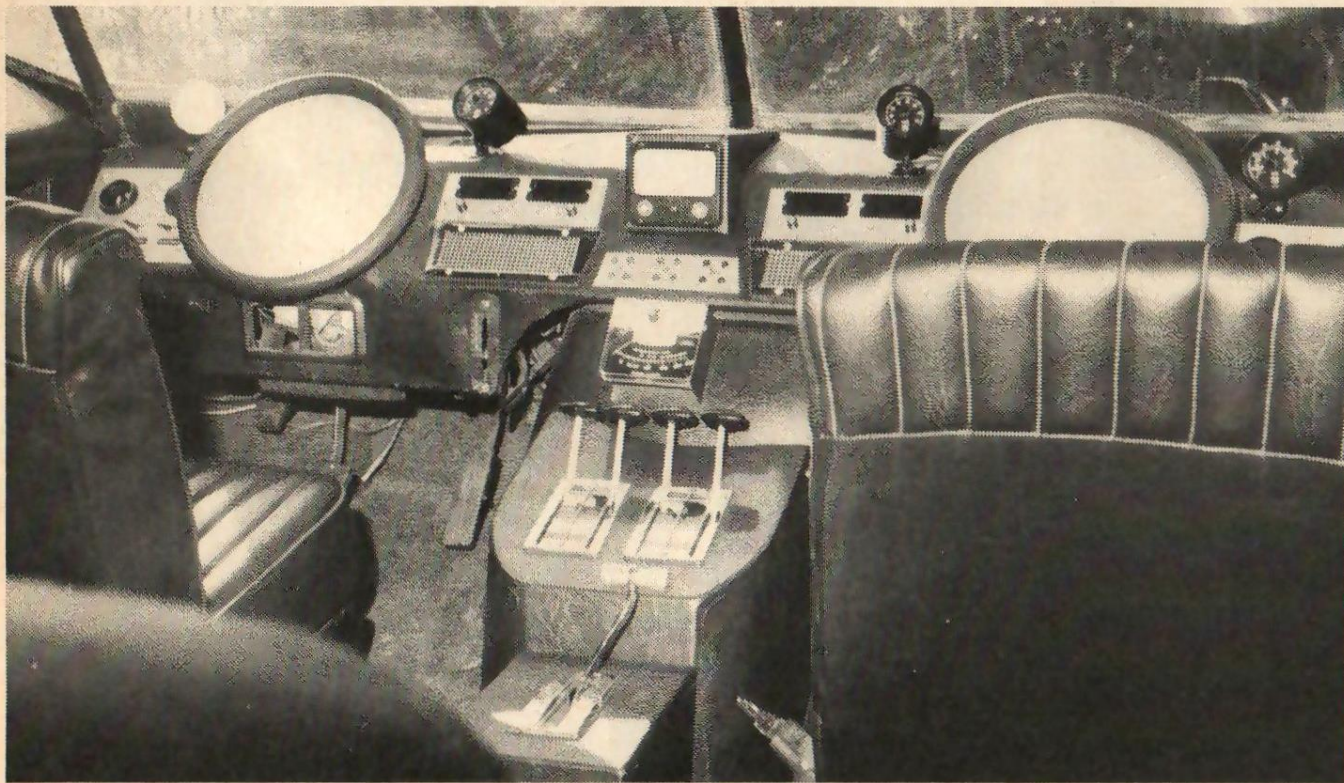
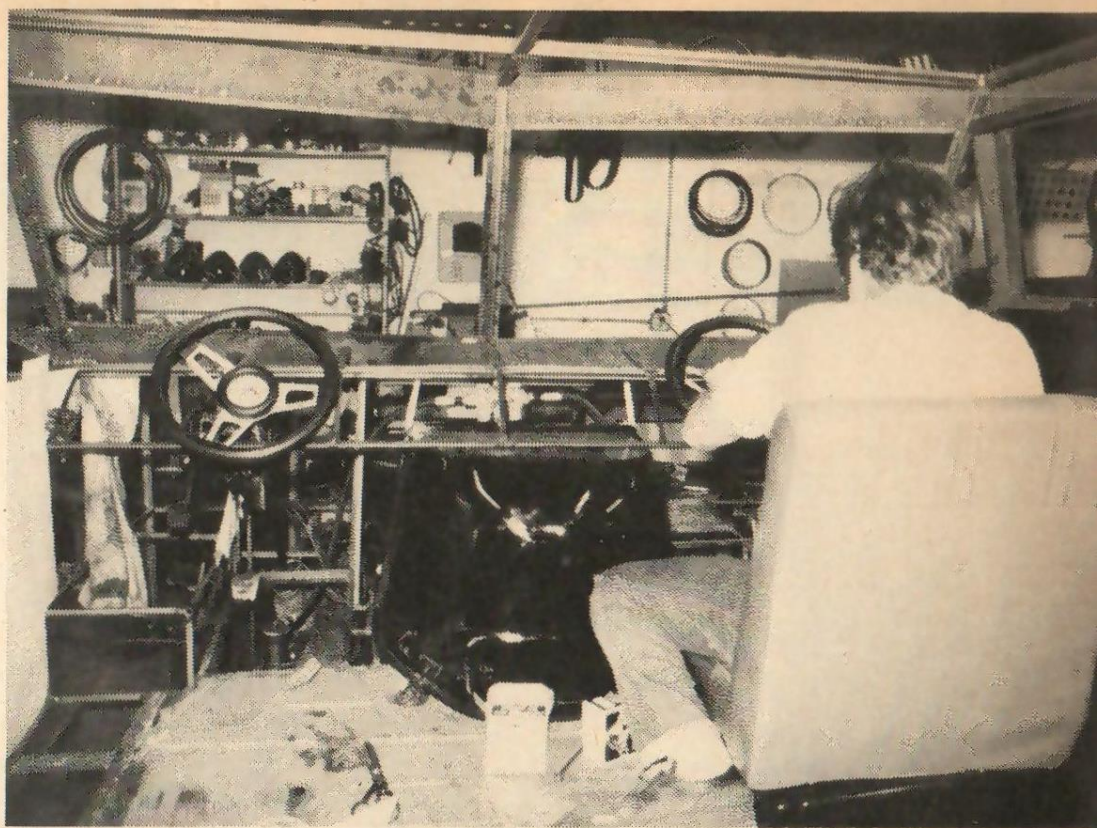


SOLAR VAN

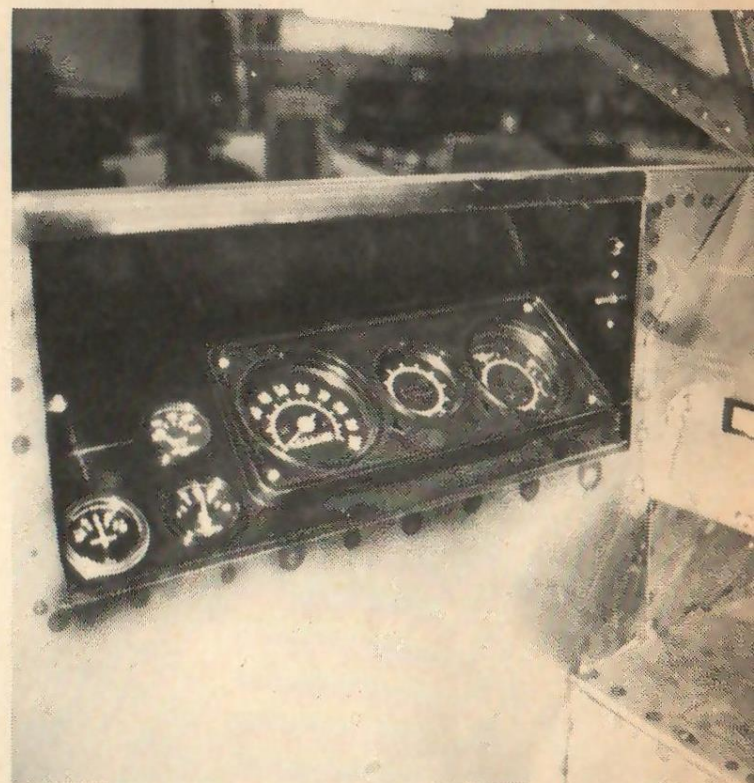




Dean and his crew stripped the Chevy van to the frame and began re-designing the space body with box tubing.



Completed and ready for the camera, the Solar Craft dash has controls for the special hydraulic landing gear suspension as well as dual controls for each driver's position. (Driver's Training 2001 style!)



Since everything in the Solar Craft works, Jeffries had to design special instruments and controls.



Set up for a moving shot. Lights and camera are positioned for an interior shot of the Solar Craft in motion.



MIDNIGHT SUN

A Practical Prize Winner

By Duane A. Pancoast

When Walt Supley sets out to customize a vehicle, it's a major project in planning, execution and results.

Walt is a graphic designer and his father is a carpenter. Together, they do nice work. The black van is named *Midnight Sun*, a theme which is carried to even the most minute detail—the side marker lights. These special red, orange and yellow lenses were fashioned using a technique called baked crystal. This involves putting glass in an oven where the heat makes it crackle. Lead from a hobby shop was then used to accent the lenses.

This is only a minor part of the customizing job, which took four months to design and a year to build. It is so practical, which is why we were first intrigued with the truck. It was the stove and wet sink that first attracted our attention. They were sticking out the rear, similar to the

Continued on page 58





Custom interior constructed by Walt and his dad features handcrafted wood paneling and gold crushed velvet. Double tier console houses all the electronic goodies. Console was designed and built by the Supleys.



Pull out the awning and *Midnight Sun* is ready to cook.

slide out units found in some camping trailers. The only difference is that these swing out and rest on a tripod. When not in use, they store under the dinette/bed. A propane tank on the side of the three burner stove provides energy while the wet sink is supplied by a 15 gallon tank under the truck, which is filled by a trailer filler hidden in the left rear fender well.

The interior is paneled and accented by shag carpeting of earthen colors. Seams of the dark paneling run horizontally instead of the customary vertical direction to give the illusion of greater space. Every seam of the 10 sheets of paneling matches. If you were to run a level line from the paneled dash to the walls, the dinette benches and the cabinets, all seams would be exactly on the same level. The hand built cabinets include a paneled front icebox and drawers in the other side with a swing out door to keep them in place when driving. Not only do the seams match on the two doors, but they match on the drawers as well.

Over the driver's compartment, the sunroof is a standard van unit. In back, two long thin Horizon side windows are mounted in the roof on either side of a light box. These side windows were slow movers at the local van shop. They were intended to slant on the sides, but support beams are in the way. In the ceiling, though, they are great. The cut glass in the lightbox hides fluorescent lights. This plastic stained glass is also used in the upper doors of the center cabinet. A top drawer cutting board and counter top matches the tabletop and holds a TV and bar. Up front, a special dog house drink tray was hand built. The overhead console was also hand built and houses an SBE CB and Pioneer Super Tuner 8-Track on the top level and VDO gauges from a Porsche are on the second tier.

Ed Carbone designed the electronics which are not fed to the rear of the vehicle in the ordinary way. Instead, lengths of garden hose were used to serve as conduit. This eliminates any chance of insulation scraping on metal and shorting out. Because the Supleys truck in upstate New York, they need plenty of insulation, so they used styrofoam. One inch of foam has the insulative effect of six inches of fiberglass. For total privacy, curtains circle the windshield area on a special track under the overhead console.

Outside, the van's qualities are subtle. No murals adorn the black paint. Unfortunately that will change because tasteless judges knock too many points off at shows. It does

Continued on page 67

How to Troubleshoot a Dead Engine

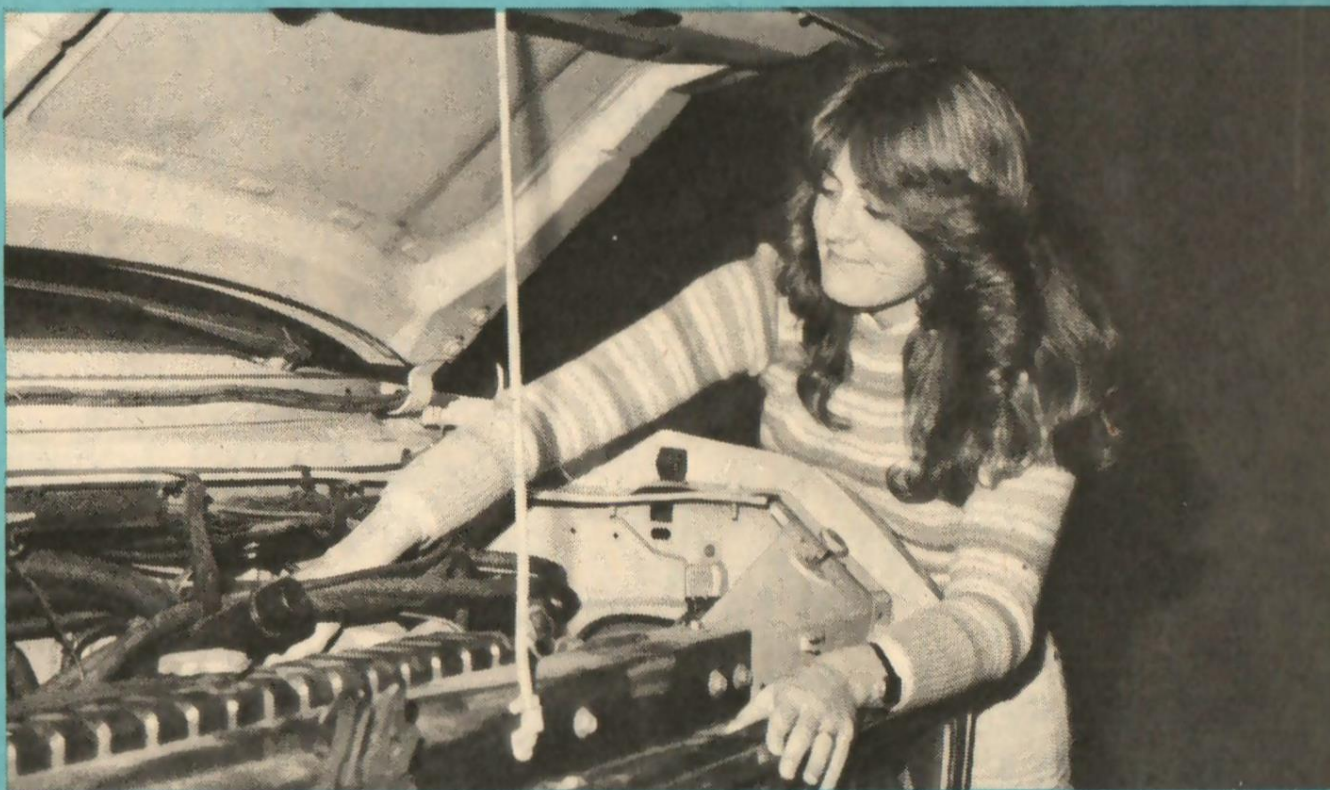
by Terry Cook

What to check if your van won't start

It had to happen to your van sooner or later, but because you put this issue of CUSTOM VANS in the storage compartment of your van, you've got it now that you need it. You've just gone out to your van, jumped in, turned the key and nothing happened. You haven't got the faintest idea why it won't start. You don't have to be a mechanic to figure it out, and the chances are pretty good that once you've diagnosed the problem you can solve it. There are two basic reasons why an engine won't start; either it's not getting sufficient fuel or it's not getting enough spark.

IF THE ENGINE WON'T SPIN OVER

If you've turned the key and the engine won't even spin over, the chances are that the problem is of an electrical nature. Perhaps you've been playing your stereo for hours with the engine shut off, and have drained juice from the battery. Hit the horn button and see if the horn will blow at its normal intensity when the key is in the ON position. If the horn and headlights work, you know you've got some zap in the battery. It might just be that the shifter (assuming you've got an automatic transmission) isn't in the Park or neutral position and that the neutral safety switch is just doing its job. Jiggle the shifter and try the key again. If that doesn't remedy the problem, the next thing to check is the battery terminals. Corrosion can occur over a period of time and build up on the battery terminals, even if the cables have been attached to the battery. You might hear the starter motor clicking when you turn the key or perhaps there is no noise at all. Remove the battery cables from the battery and carefully clean all the crud away from the terminal posts as well as from the ends of the cables where

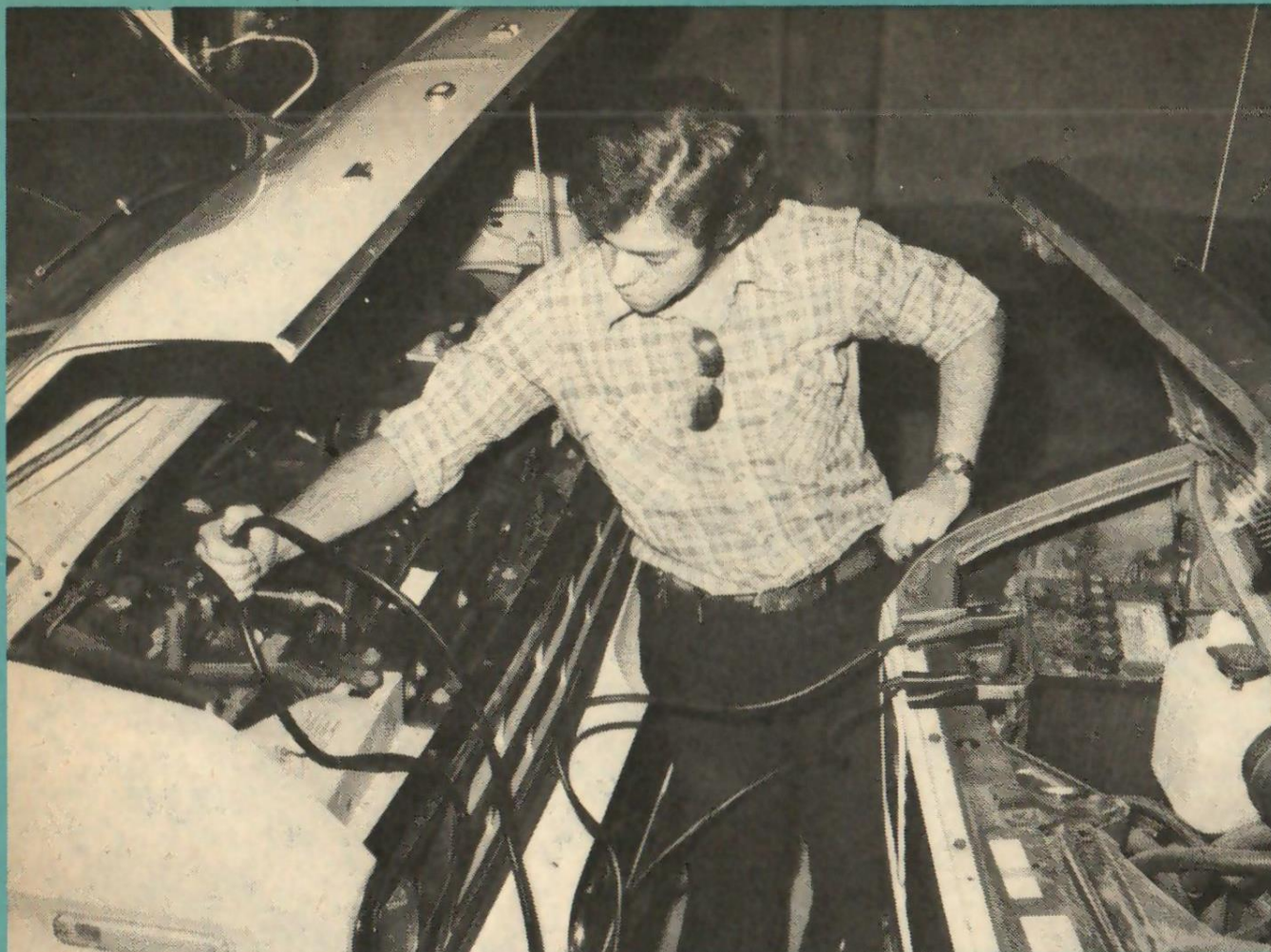


they attach to the posts. A wire brush can be used here but the handy tool to have is a battery terminal brush which can be purchased for a few dollars at an auto parts store. One part of the brush cleans the inside of the cable clamps while the other part of the brush is designed for cleaning the terminal posts themselves. Water and a bit of baking soda can be used to clean the terminals. Put the cables back on the battery, tighten them



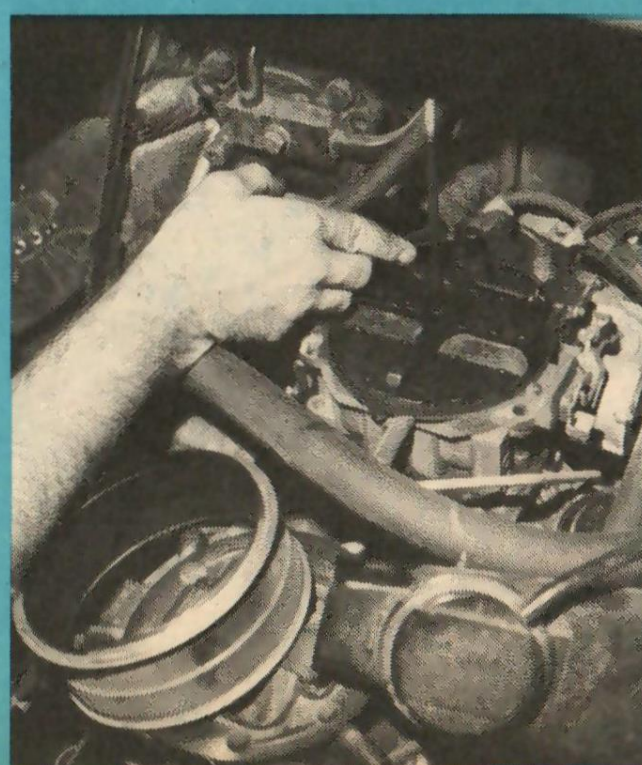
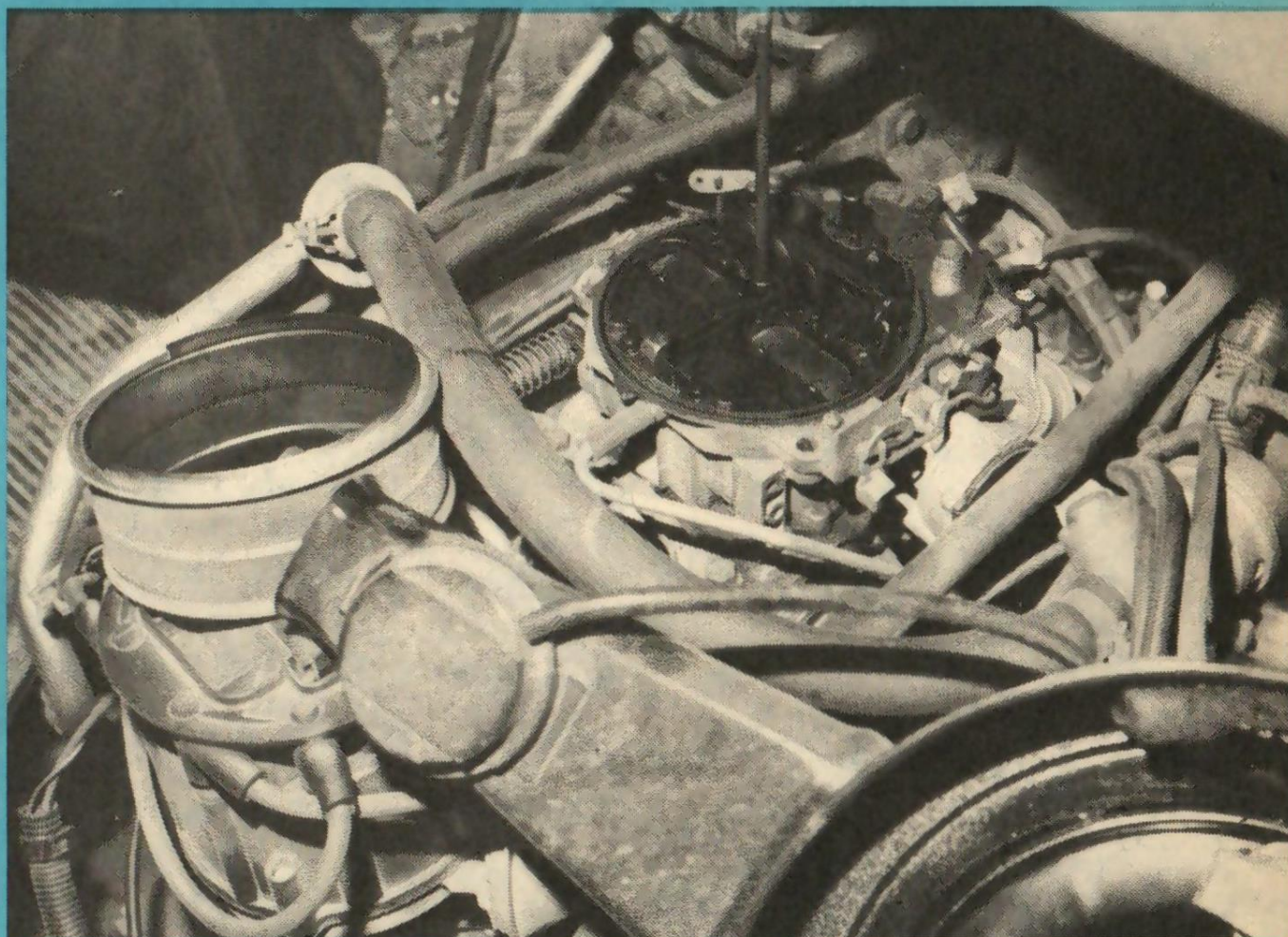
down and try the key again, as this might solve the problem and provide the good electrical connection that was needed to start the van.

If the engine still won't spin over you might have a dead battery. The easiest way to keep your battery from draining is to wire your sound system, interior lights, etc., to a second battery, which is not difficult to install. Remember that wiring the CB direct to the battery could prove to be a wise exception as it allows you to use it in the case of an emergency without the need of the ignition key. Assuming a dead battery appears to be the culprit, a set of jumper cables should solve the problem. It's a good idea to invest a few bucks in a pair of jumper cables and to ALWAYS carry them in your van. While you're buying the jumper cables, make sure they're heavy duty units that are extra long, because they're a lot easier to hook from van to van when they're fifteen feet rather than six feet long. If you don't have a set of jumper cables, call up a friend who does, or call the local service station. In case you didn't know, jumper cables tap the power of a fully charged battery and transfer it to your battery to provide the sufficient zap needed to kick your engine over.



HOW TO USE JUMPER CABLES

You are going to need a charged battery that is of the same voltage as your own (these days all vans we know of use 12 volt batteries). Attach one jumper cable to the positive terminal of the battery of the van that won't start and the other end of that cable to the positive terminal of the charged battery. You need not remove the battery cables from the batteries but you should wiggle the jumper cable clamp to make sure it has a good contact with the battery. Before you go any further it might be a good idea to switch the heater fan to the full-on position in the van that won't start. This will take up some of the slack should there be a surge of electrical power. Attach one end of the second jumper cable to the negative terminal of the charged battery (you can determine which terminals are positive and negative by cleaning away the terminal post and the area immediately around it and looking for the plus or minus sign) and carefully attach the other end of the second jumper cable to the engine block of the van with the low or dead battery. Do not attach it to the negative terminal of the van that won't start. If you've crossed them and put positive to negative and negative to positive you will notice a bunch of sparks jump from the tip of the last cable to the terminal when you touch them together. Do not attempt to attach them this way as you've got them crossed and could short the system. If there is no splash of sparks the chances are that you've got it right. Just remember positive to positive and negative to negative. Now try to spin the motor over on the van with the dead battery.



IF THE ENGINE STILL WON'T SPIN OVER

If you have attached the jumper cables and the engine still won't spin over, and you have cleaned the battery posts and cables, stick a screwdriver so that it touches both of the large terminals on the starter motor solenoid. If the engine spins over, that is a good indication that the solenoid is bad and needs replacement. If the starter motor spins but obviously isn't engaging the teeth of the flywheel to make the engine turn over, then the problem lies with the starter motor.

IF THE ENGINE SPINS OVER BUT WON'T START

If you have been spinning the engine over (with or without jumper cables) and it still refuses to start, the question of fuel supply immediately comes to mind. Do you have gas in the tank? If your gas gauge is defective, then you can jump on the rear

bumper and listen for gas sloshing around in the tank. Assuming you've got gas in the tank, pull the engine cover and remove the air cleaner to see if the carburetor is in fact supplying gas. This can be done by peering down into the carburetor throat while depressing the gas pedal to the floor one time. Make sure you leave the ignition key off at this point in time and above all don't have any lighted cigarettes in the area. If you see a small squirt of gasoline being shot into the venturi (the throat of the carb) you know the secondary pump(s) is supplying fuel. You might have to hold the butterfly open with your finger while you do this in order to get a clear view of what is happening inside the carb throat. If you see

gasoline (and smell it) then you know that gas is in fact being supplied to the float bowls and that lack of fuel is not the problem.

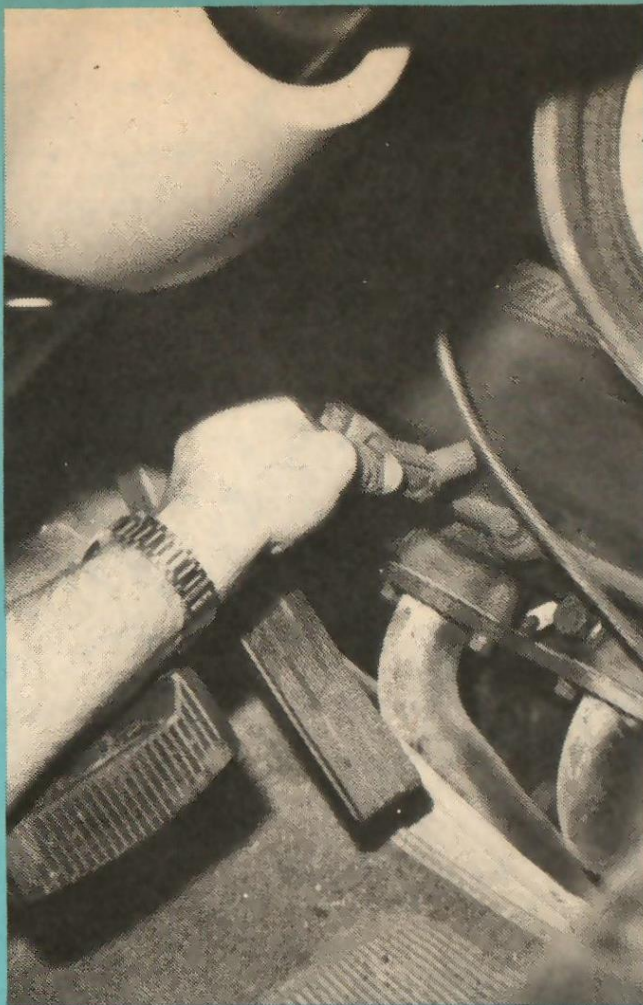
If there is no gasoline squirting in, remove the fuel line and have a friend crank the engine over to see if gas squirts out of the fuel line as it should. Here again, smoking is prohibited. If fuel pumps out of the line there is a possibility that the fuel filter is clogged. Check it and replace the in-line fuel filter if necessary. In the field you can try removing it and getting home without a filter, but it should be replaced with a new one at the first opportunity. If the fuel filter appears to be in good shape but the line still doesn't pump gas, it could either be a clogged fuel line or perhaps the fuel tank itself has quit working. Often the fuel line can be cleaned by removing the cap to the gas tank and wrapping a rag or silver duct tape around the filler neck opening while an air hose is inserted. It's possible you can clear the fuel line from the tank to the pump in this manner.

If the fuel pump itself is on the blink and you can't scrounge a replacement, it's the middle of the night and you absolutely have to get to a gas station, we remember some horror stories about a jury-rig gravity fed beer can full of gasoline with a hose running from the beer can to the carburetor. Remember to hold the beer can higher than the carburetor at all times, and no smoking.

One common mistake which might fall under the category of technique rather than troubleshooting is exactly how you go about starting your van. We have already mentioned that pumping the accelerator pedal squirts a bit of raw gas into the throat of the carb each time you punch the pedal. So, if you sit there pumping the gas pedal you could easily flood the engine (provide so much raw fuel that an over-rich condition occurs and you literally "drown" the spark plugs with fuel). Assuming the engine is cold the advisable method is to press the gas pedal down one time (twice if the temperature is below zero) and then let your foot come all the way off the pedal and turn the key. If the engine is flooded (you can often tell by the strong gasoline odor) the best bet is to hold the pedal to the floor and crank the engine over for twenty or thirty seconds.

CHECKING OUT THE IGNITION SYSTEM

Assuming you've got enough juice to spin the engine over steadily and gas appears to be getting to the carburetor, it's time to investigate the ignition system. You might need a friend to

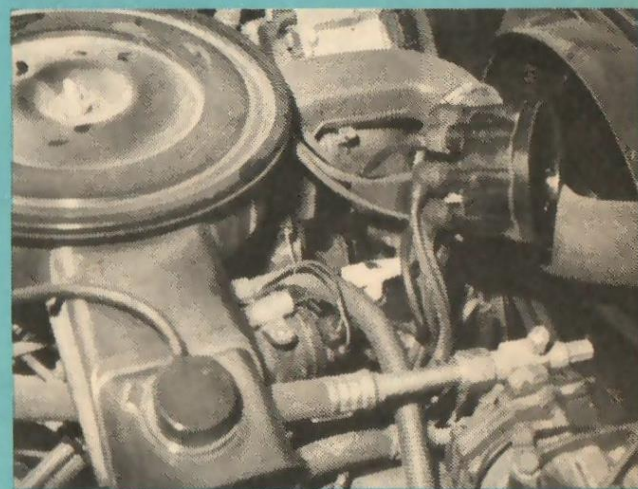


help you because you can't be in two places at once. Pull off a plug wire and hold it close to a grounded piece of metal that isn't corroded or covered with grease or rubber. You can hold the plug wire without fear of shock unless you happen to be standing in a puddle of water. Look for a spark to jump from the plug wire to the metal when the engine is cranking over. If the spark is blue in color you know you've got a strong spark, but if it's yellow or orange the spark might be weak. If you see a strong spark perhaps the problem is that the plugs are fouled, but this is improbable. To see if the plugs are fouled you can pull one and inspect it.

It is also possible that the plugs need to be replaced, but this would show itself with engine "missing" (which you can feel when you are driving) long before it would be a cause for the engine not starting.

If your check of the plug wire re-

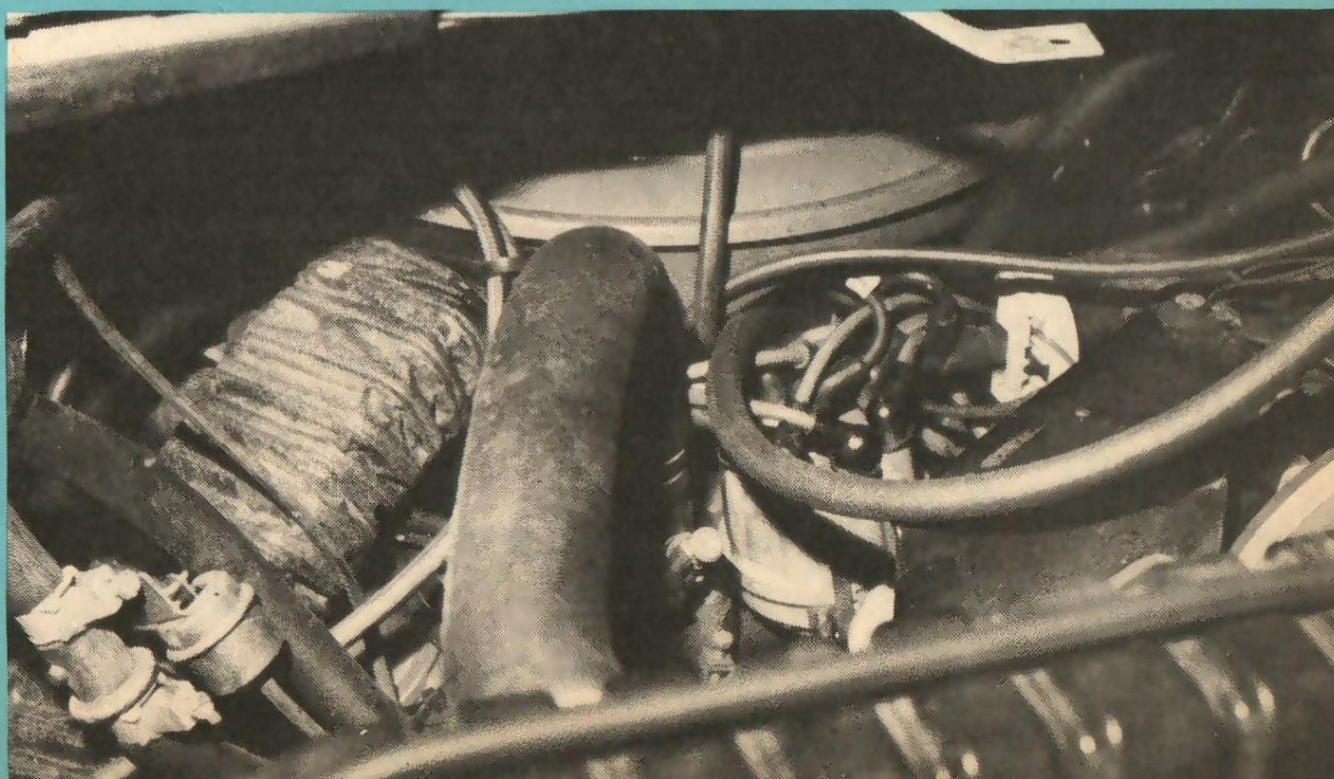
vealed no spark at all, pull off the distributor cap and inspect for burned points (which can be spotted if the contacts are pitted). In any case don't loosen the bolt that holds the distributor in place as you will alter the timing (unless you are experienced with ignition systems). Assuming the van was running before you had the problem, the position of the distributor should not be the cause. If you are experienced you can use a timing light to re-time

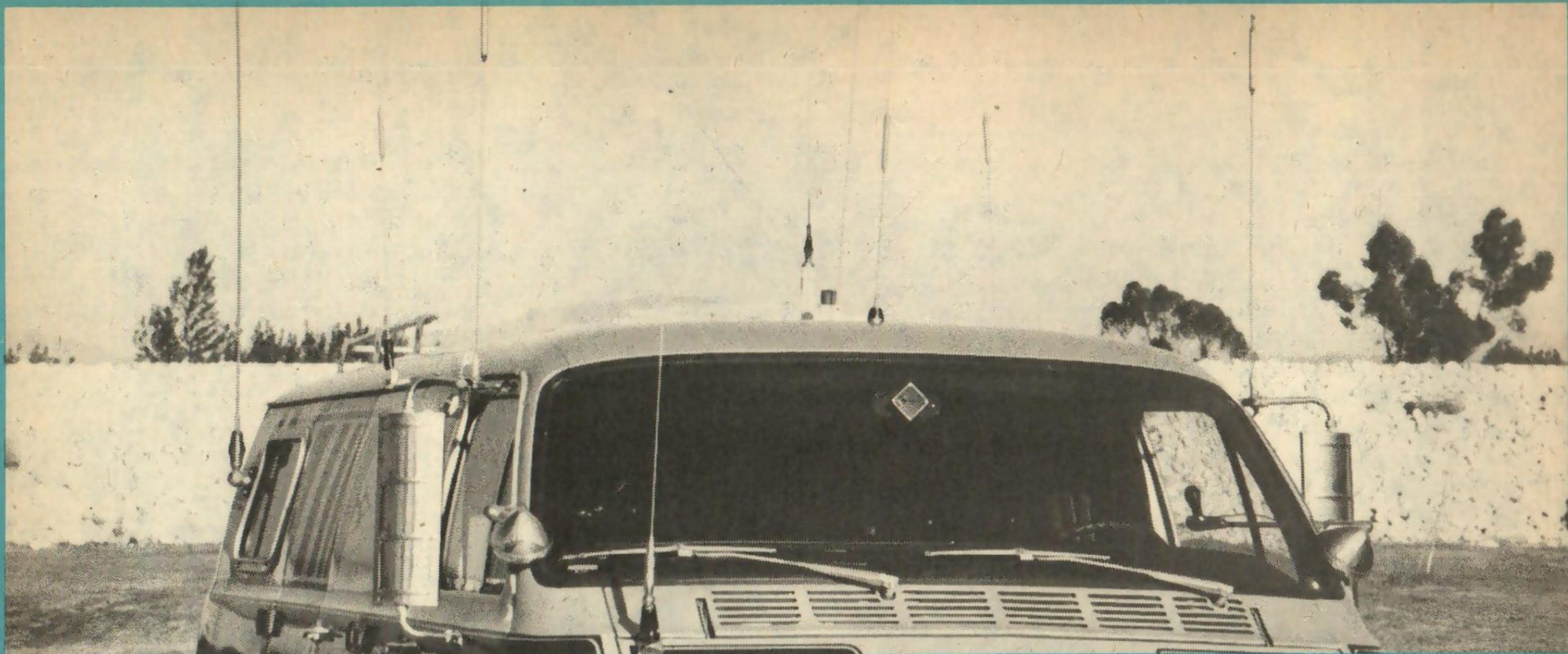


the distributor.

With the distributor cap off you can have your friend spin the engine over to check for the ignition arc. If there is no spark visible you can unplug the condenser and spin the motor over again. If you get a spark, the condenser should be replaced. If there is no spark the coil may be shot. You can check this by borrowing a coil from a friend or passing motorist and replace your coil with his to see if this is the problem.

If all this fails we suggest you call a mechanic. Chances are that the procedure we have described should enable you to diagnose and solve the majority of ills that are involved when a van won't start. The best way to prevent this from happening again is good preventative maintenance. Take care of your van with frequent tune-ups, a cared-for battery, regular oil and filter changes, and chances are good that your van will take good care of you. ●





Getting on the Air

By Sterling Tate

There are dozens of styles of CB antennas on the market, but they are all derivations of the basic types listed here. What type of antenna to choose is sometimes confusing, depending on how much you expect from your rig, and whether or not you want to punch holes in your van and your pocket book. Antennas can run anywhere from under \$10 to as high as \$50 for a power AM/FM/CB rig.

The idea, of course, is to get on the air with as much power as possible and the best system in the world won't get out worth a hoot on a cheap antenna. The best way to modulate is through a steel or fiberglass whip. Whips are usually mounted on the body or on a special antenna mount (see Feb. '78 CVM, pg. 19). Whips are 102 inches long and when mounted high on the rear quarter panel of the van, they give you an approximate height of 14 feet 5 inches. This means you get out better, but watch for trees, low flying birds, and freeway overpasses, which in most states are 14 feet 6 inches.

The next best choice is a base load antenna mounted in the center of the roof. Base loads are shorter in length (from about 24 to 48 inches), and when mounted in the center of a van roof, they give a more even radiating pattern. For a quick installation, a lip mount, base load antenna can be installed on your hood. Transmission suffers some, but it's an easy economical hookup.

Center loaded antennas are either mirror mounts, gutter clip mounts, or

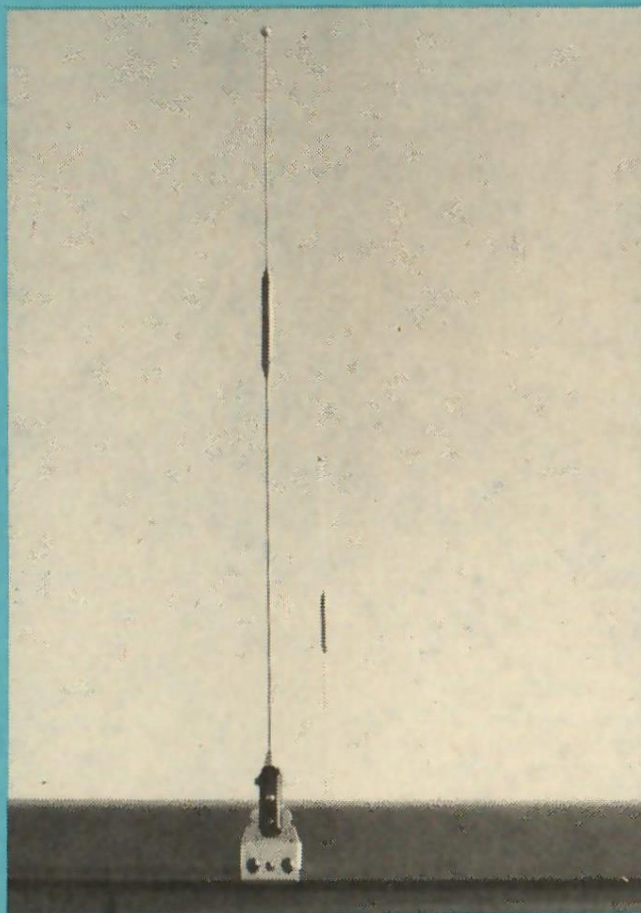
Antennas to Modulate By

roof mounted. Mirror mounts work best when they are co-phased and require no holes for installation. The same applies to gutter clips. A center load roof mount is a good choice but usually comes without a shock spring, making it more susceptible to breakage.

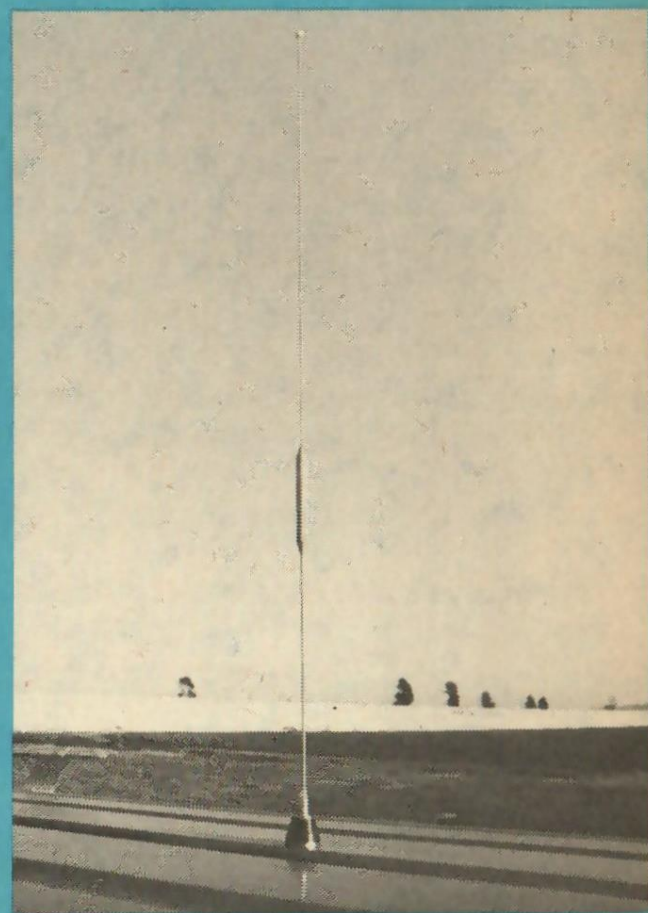
A popular design is the continuously loaded antenna which comes in various length from 2 to 8 feet and in a wide variety of colors to match

your van. Installation is usually the same as for whip antennas. Continuously loaded antennas differ in that the entire length functions as a loading coil.

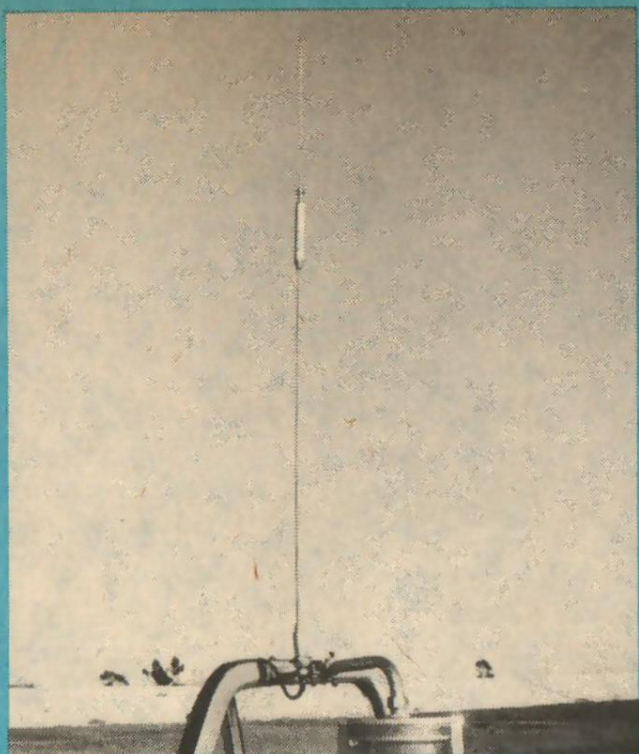
Proper installation and antenna match are essentials, but choosing the best antenna is still a matter of personal choice. However, if you can't make up your mind, you can always do what this vanner did. Buy them all!



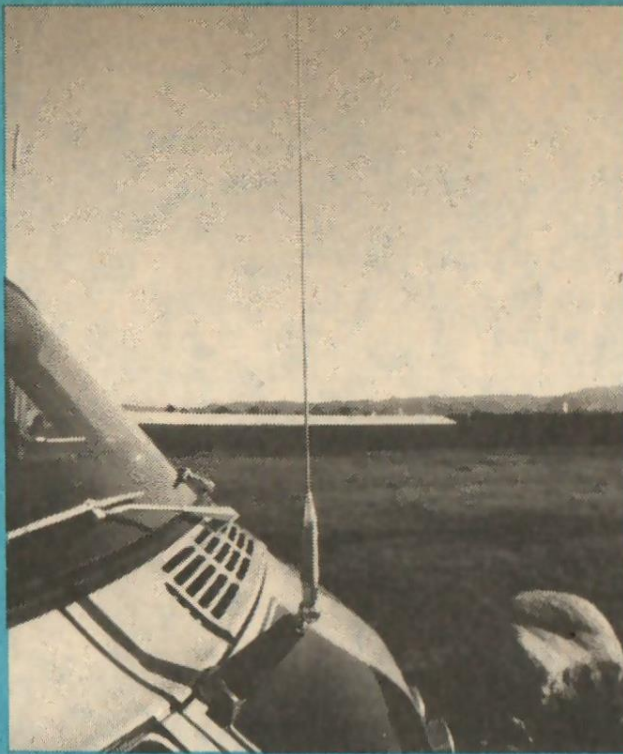
Gutter clips are an inexpensive way to get yourself on the air. Like mirror mounts, they do not require any body work for installation and should be co-phased for best performance.



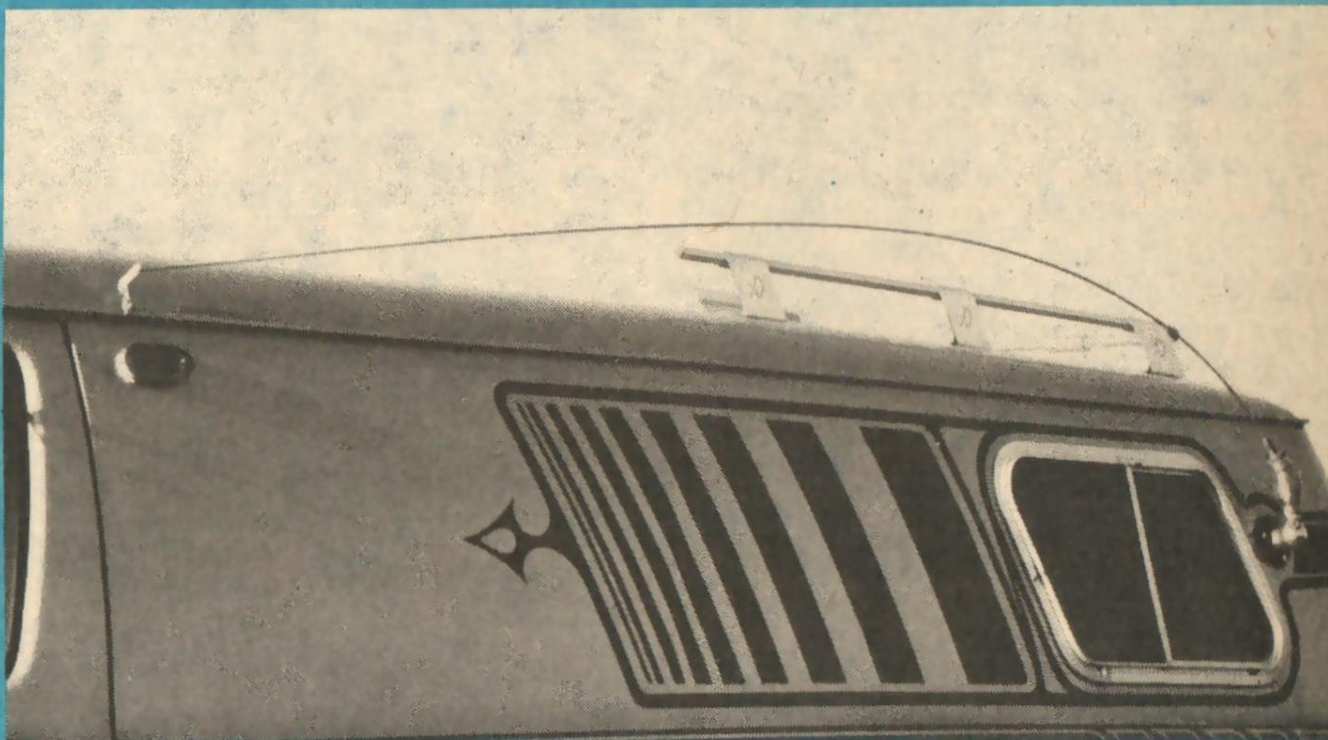
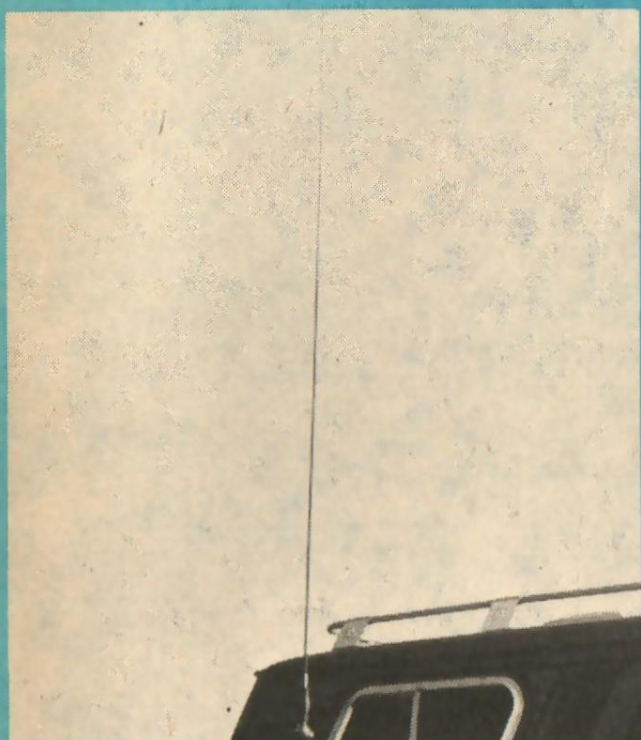
Center load antennas work best on car trunk lids because they do not have springs. When on a van, they can be broken by tree branches raking across the top of your roof.



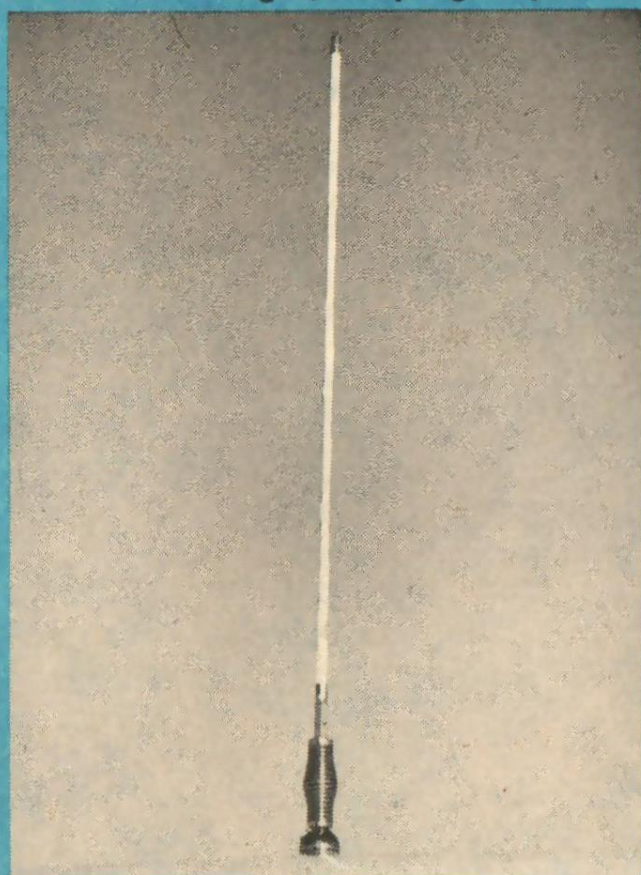
Mirror Mount. Another no-holes antenna that works well. Mirror Mounts perform best when they are co-phased (in pairs).



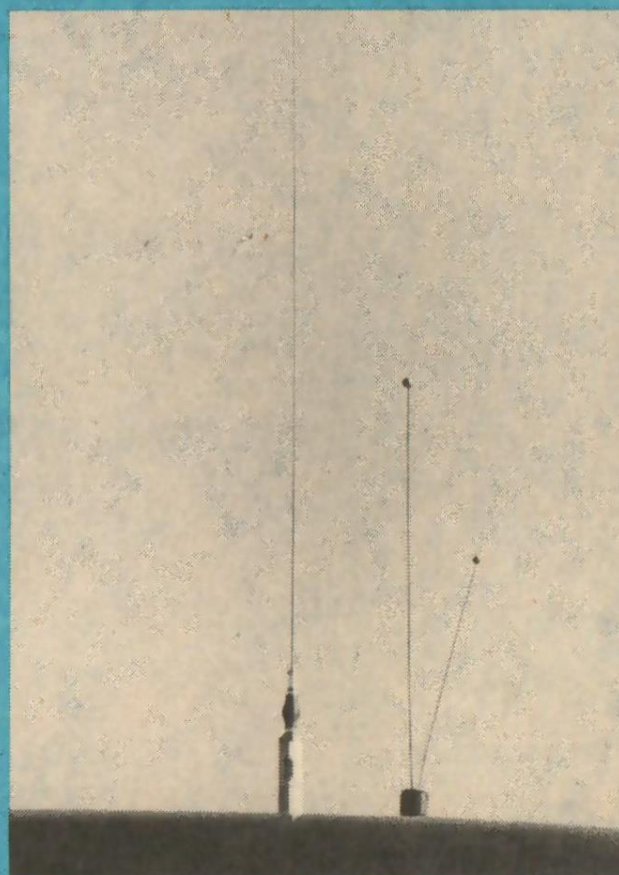
Lip Mount. Designed for car trunks, the lip mount can be attached to your hood for a quick no-holes installation.



Fiberglass and Steel Whips are the most common and durable antenna. (Durable in regards to theft . . . hardly anyone rips-off a whip antenna.) At 102 inches in length, whips give you the greatest elevation above ground and better signal strength.



A very popular design is the Continuously Loaded antenna. They are available in a large selection of colors and lengths. CL antennas are mounted in the same fashion as steel or fiberglass whips—on a spring.



A Base Load antenna is a good choice. Positioned in the center of your roof, a BL gives an even radiating pattern. Like the center load roof mount though, they can be broken off because of the ridged mount.

Charlie put a gull-wing door on his rig, primed and painted it, and now he wanted his door decorated with his name. He brought it to Glen Yuengling, and we were there—all day—to watch.

Glen is 21 years old, but he cut his teeth on an airbrush, starting at the age of 15, doing bike tanks and helmets.

The work begins with a careful wiping with either PrepSol or R&M solvent, to remove any residual waxes from the surface. The full-size design is drawn on paper and the outlines are gone over with a pounce wheel that perforates the paper, making small holes. Masking tape is applied evenly to the surface, then the pounced paper is taped over the masking tape base. A sock filled with baby powder is smacked over the design, and the powder comes through the small perforations, leaving the design on the tape. The design paper is then removed, and the talc dots are connected by a grease pencil. "When you're transferring designs," Glen offered, "don't try to use a felt-tip pen. That stuff is too hard to remove."

Now a razor blade comes into play, and the letters to be applied are outlined with the blade, the centers are removed. The masking tape is thereby formed into a stencil.

Now the compressor and airbrush are brought in. Glen uses a white base coat because the Candy Apple transparent paints just apply color and the white base coat makes them more brilliant. The paints have to be mixed, thinned and then strained to avoid clogging. The airbrush is moved constantly, and the paint layers are built up slowly to avoid any blotching. The airbrush paint goes on dry or nearly dry, and care must be taken not to touch the surface. Oils from the fingertips can cause all sorts of problems.

The name of the truck is going to be "Rainbow Blues," and the word "Rainbow" went on first. Glen started with the first color, brushing it in sweeping arcs over the masking tape. "What color will you go for next, Glen," we asked. "I dunno," he replied, but it wasn't long before we really had a rainbow of color on the door of the truck. Glen also explained that learning to use an airbrush is the hardest part of the job, but once you master the technique, it's yours for life.

Now white highlights were added, and the word "Rainbow" seemed, to our own unpracticed eye, to be finished. Using the corner of the razor blade, Glen lifted the masking tape which came away easily. Now that the letters stood out in fairly sharp contrast to the body color of

the door, it looked strikingly beautiful, but Glen now reached for a small artist's brush and using black lettering enamel, he outlined and filled the letters. Against the sharp contrast with the black, the colors stood out even more, and he explained that this black, one-shot enamel is made for this work. It leaves no brush marks, and the paint doesn't run. "Enamel," Glen explained, "can be applied over lacquer, but not the other way around!" The enameling process also provides the final letter form.

Now Glen stood back to check his work, and another sidewalk superintendent walked over to check it with him. "Too bad you didn't spell it

right!" he offered. Glen jumped, for this sort of thing does happen.

The word "Blues" was to be applied in silver leaf. Glen mixed a clear liquid called "gold size" with a bit of bronze powder. "This stuff is like a glue for the leaf," he explained. Because it is clear, it's hard to see. The bronze powder adds just a bit of color to make it more visible. Using a soft brush, he painted the word "Blue" using a sweeping stroke. This was painted entirely freehand, using just two strips of transparent tape as guides. The tape was removed, and the size was allowed to dry until it was tacky. This took about 15 minutes.

"You get to become very con-

Airbrush Stenciling

By Byron Wels



As a first step the door is cleaned with chemicals to remove all traces of wax or dirt.



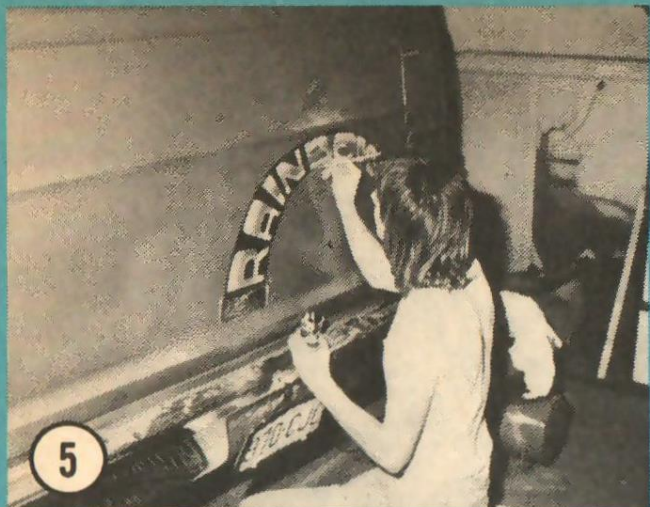
Because the colors to be used are transparent, a base coat of white is applied, after the letters have been cut out with an X-acto knife.



The perforated or pounced pattern is now taped over the masking tape. A sock filled with talc is hit over the perforations to transfer the design to the tape beneath.



After a yellow band is brushed on, blue is added to blend and make green yet still leave sufficient blue and yellow. A sweep of red was added next.



When the masking tape is peeled away, the rainbow word is indeed a rainbow. The rough edges are not important since they will next be sharpened and outlined with black enamel.



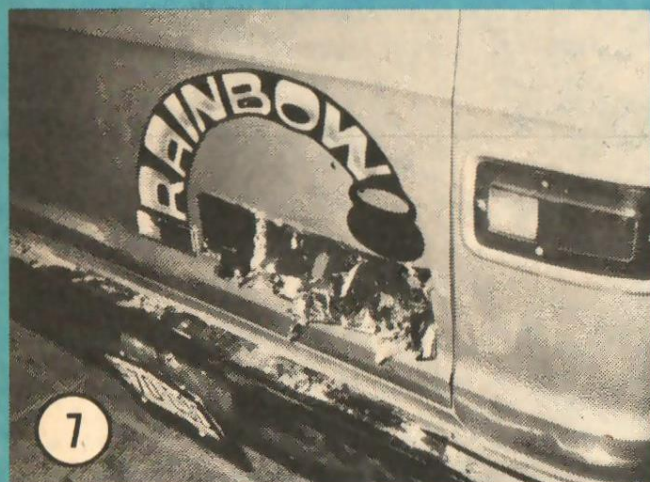
The next step? Using a piece of fine velvet wrapped around a cotton ball, he twists over the letters, imparting a depth and reflectivity.



The word "Blues" is painted in, using gold-leaf size to which a little bronze powder has been added to make the lettering more visible. This is allowed to dry until it is tacky.



The letters are again outlined with black enamel, and a drop shadow effect is added.



Here's how the door looks with the foil in place.



Using white paint in the airbrush, Glen adds highlights to render additional depth to the job.



After detailing with more black enamel and a coat of clear spray enamel, the work is finished. And hey! Did you see how he signed this job?

scious of graphics," he said. "You start to 'get off' on signs. You check all magazine ads, posters, and everything becomes another idea that you might use someday."

The sheets of silver leaf are really aluminum. Real silver would tarnish too quickly. The leaf is very thin, and the least wind causes it to move and blow. It is applied very carefully over the size, and you can actually overlap, for the leaf only sticks to the size. With the entire surface covered with the leaf, he uses a small cotton swab to brush away the excess, leaving only the letters covered.

Now a small piece of fine velvet is wrapped over a cotton ball, and using this as a stomp, he twists it over the silver, applying small, round designs in the silver to enhance its appearance and increase reflectivity. Now an additional half hour is allowed for set-up time.

Now that the leaf is ready, the letters are outlined in black and a drop-shadow is added to provide a 3-D effect. Additional size was placed at the center of the "pot" at the end of the rainbow, and spots of size were put in drops coming from the pot. We weren't sure what Glen was doing at this point, but he added gold leaf in these areas—and it's real gold, this time—he formed coins with his little black brush.

Now the airbrush came into play once again, with white paint this time. Highlights fell into place under his skillful hands, and star bursts added even more highlight.

The highlighting adds additional depth and roundness and it's applied while the base paints are still tacky so the highlights really blend in. Now the whole thing is allowed to dry.

To complete the job, a coat of clear enamel is sprayed over the whole thing to serve as a protective coat, and the job is almost complete.

Almost, because Glen is an artist with an artist's need to add a bit of himself to any given job. He sat there, staring at his work for awhile, and then turned to us. "I usually add a little 'saying'," he explained.

Using his brush, he painted in his company name, "Gasoline Alley," and then turned to this writer with a pained expression. "What can I write?" he asked.

"Put down," I suggested, "Custom Vans!"

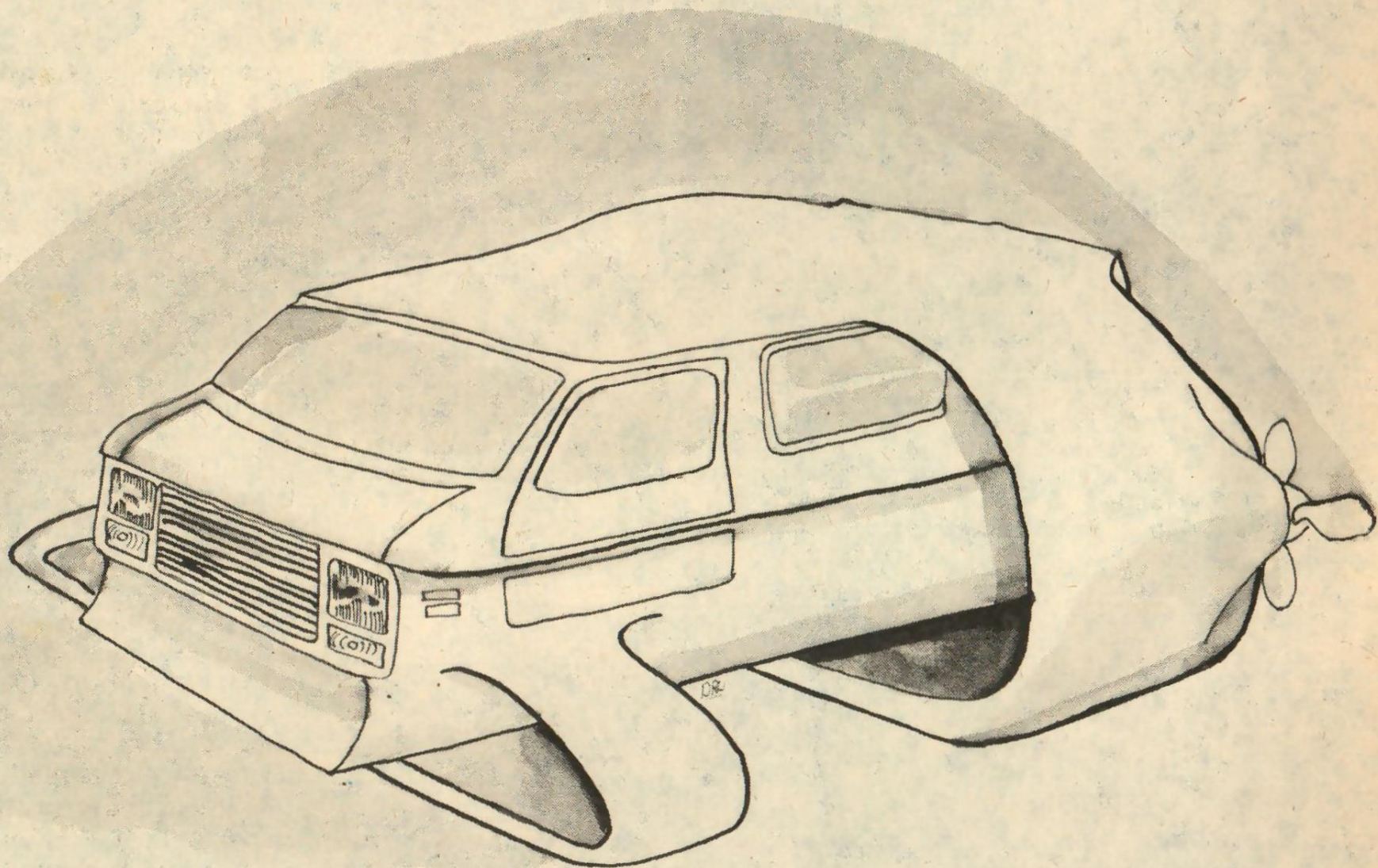
Glen dutifully painted in, using the black lettering brush, "Custom Vans," then waited patiently while we took a photo. "Finished?"

We assured the guy that we were finished. He took a rag soaked in solvent, and wiped away the words "Custom Vans." He painted in, instead, "Footloose and Fancy Free."

"There," he said. "That's better." ●

Aquavan

Artwork by Drew Cartwright



If this turns up in the next James Bond movie don't blame CUSTOM VANS. Our resident looney cartoonist, Drew Cartwright, came up with this design from far left field. It is, believe it or not, a Chevy van with heavy body work and twin screws for a quick underwater quarter mile.

Of course, if you had been in Southern California the months of December and January, this idea might not have seemed so far fetched. . . . ●

MIDNIGHT SUN

Continued from page 58

have running boards, a sun visor, square Chevy headlights in home built buckets and a grille made by cutting out and blacking out the original number. Front spoiler and flares cover the super wide B.F. Goodrich T/A radials which ride on eight spoke Appliance steel wheels. Special steel reinforcements were fashioned for the front spoiler to protect it and keep it from flapping in the breeze. A self-contained tarp is hidden in the rear spoiler and pulls out to form a compact overhead for the campsite design of *Midnight Sun*. Cibie fog lights are mounted in the cooling holes of the front spoiler.

Midnight Sun's practicality is not limited to the decor. Under the hood dwells a meek 300 cid six cylinder engine driving a three-speed manual transmission. This may not win any drag races but it sure wins the gas pump endurance. How many of you can boast 18 mpg highway?

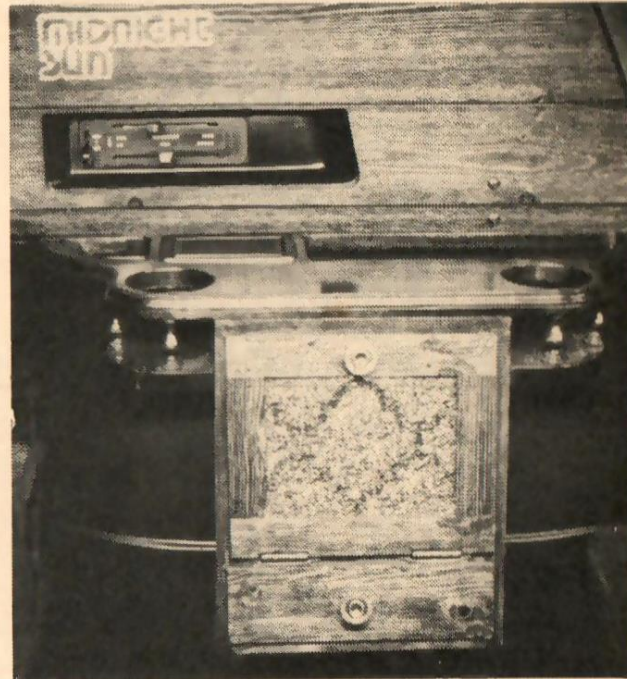
When Walt Supley and Dad start a project, time is not of the essence—quality and practicality is!



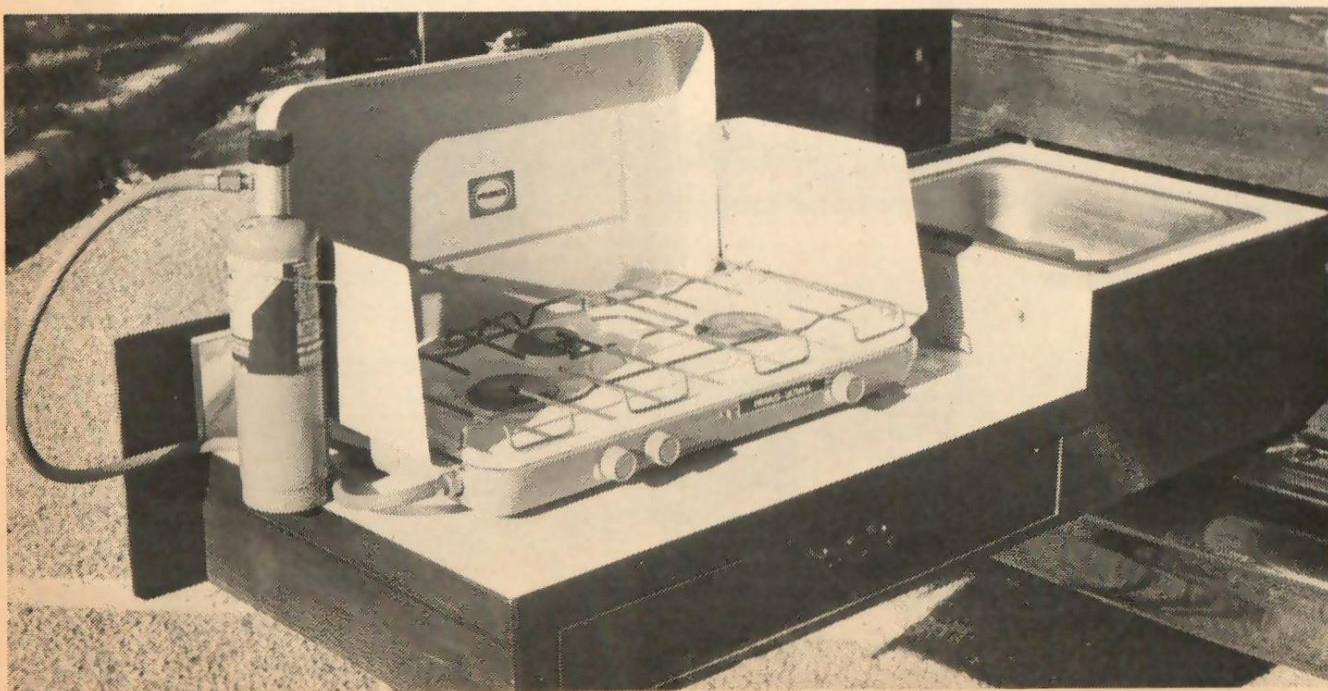
Midnight Sun's super clean lines are set off with the addition of flares, front and rear spoilers and a custom homemade quad light grille.



No extras. *Midnight Sun* is equipped for full function and no unnecessary goodies. Powered by a 300 cid engine and 3 speed manual transmission, this "dark horse" wins van-in trophies for what it keeps inside.



Walt and his dad custom built the snack tray and did all the woodwork. The special dash treatment is an example of what time and effort went into the *Midnight Sun's* interior.



Home on the range. A light tug on the finely handcrafted wood cabinet and out comes a full cooktop and sink.



What's cooking? This is not a normal rear view from a custom van viewpoint.

A Behind the Scenes Look at Van Converters

CUSTOM VANS BY STAR

Individuals in a Sea of Conformity

By Dennis Adler

Star Custom as the name implies is a custom shop. Although they use an assembly line technique, no two vans are the same. Each one is totally customized throughout.

Star's President, Don Moore, invited CVM to take a close look at their Anaheim, California plant. "Every item that goes into a Star van is manufactured in our shop. Even the seats and sun visors are custom designed and build right here," explained Don.

As custom goes you can only carry a theme so far. Star designs interiors with a choice of either wood and Naugahyde walls and ceiling, all wood, or all Naugahyde. The customer dictates what color schemes

and extras go into his van. Don Moore, Jr., who supervises all construction, told us that one customer wanted a mirrored roof inside, and he got it!

Templates are not used since every cabinet and interior layout is unique. Finished cabinet makers are employed by Star to turn out custom cabinets to deck out fifteen to twenty vans per week.

All fabrics are selected for each van from Star's material storage area. The combinations are endless, and since Star manufactures their own seats, the material used in the van's interior can match.

Turning out pure custom interiors is only one way Star preserves its in-

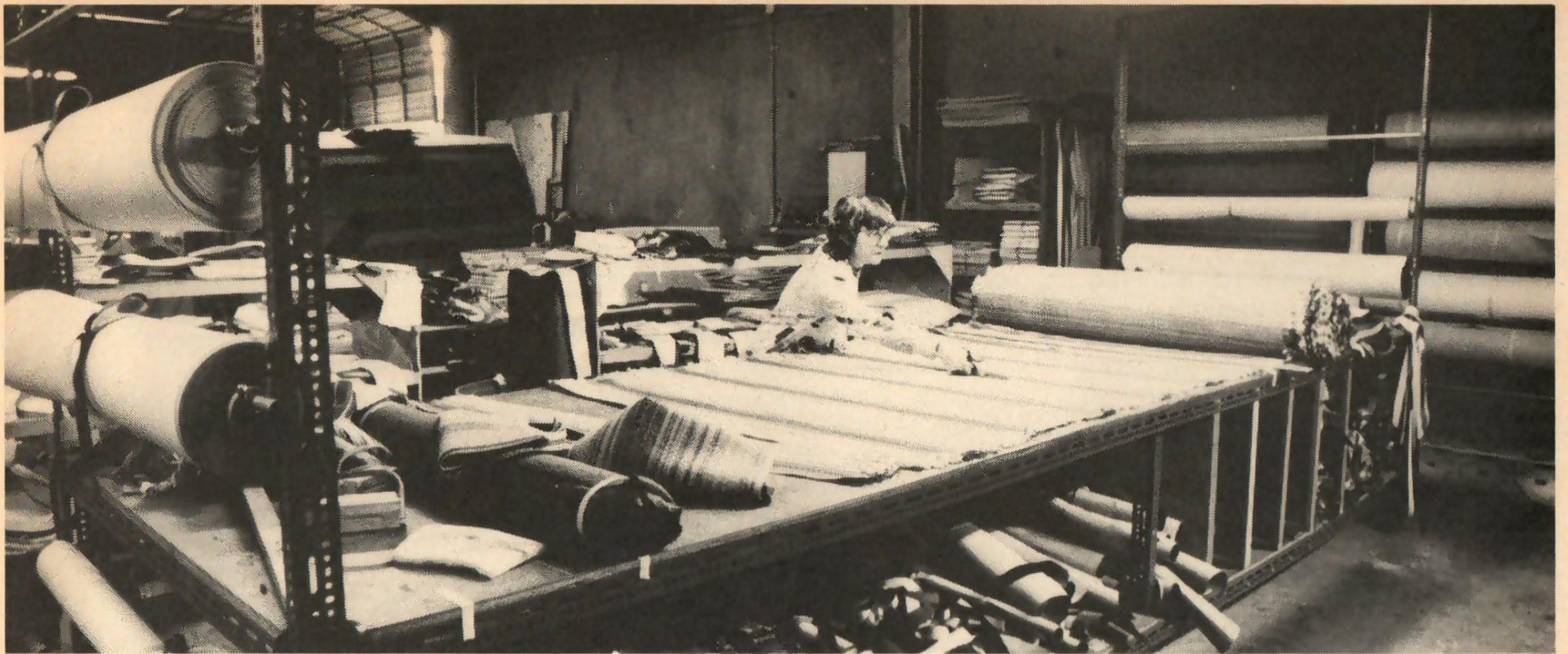
dividuality. Paint is the key. Ray Hare is the real "Star" at Star. Every van receives a custom one-of-a-kind mural by Ray.

Holding a Masters degree in Fine Arts, Ray is not your average geometric muralist—he paints! He says that he works from a theme. If the customer wants a sports mural or a scenic, Ray can turn the side of a van into a motocross race or a crisp winter morning in the Rockies.

"A van is like a moving canvas. It is a two dimensional surface, and I try to create an illusion of the third dimension. That is more important to me than detail. The mural must work as a whole. I've worked on canvas for a good eighteen years. I have had paintings in museums and in art exhibits across the country, but a van is special. It will be seen by a lot more people than would see a painting in a museum. The number of people that see a van traveling around town is innumerable. There is a certain amount of excitement to painting a van because you know so many people will look at it. In a way, I'm painting for the public."

With all this individuality, it was no surprise when Don told us that Star is the only customizer in the United States that builds directly for new car prep, which is a get-ready division of Chrysler Corp., in the California, Arizona, Nevada and Hawaii zone. If you order a custom van directly from Chrysler's Dodge division, it will be customized by Star. For Star, being an individual that caters to the individual has meant success. ●





Material is purchased in bulk. Fabrics can be custom tailored for each van. The material used for the interior can also be used to upholster the seats.



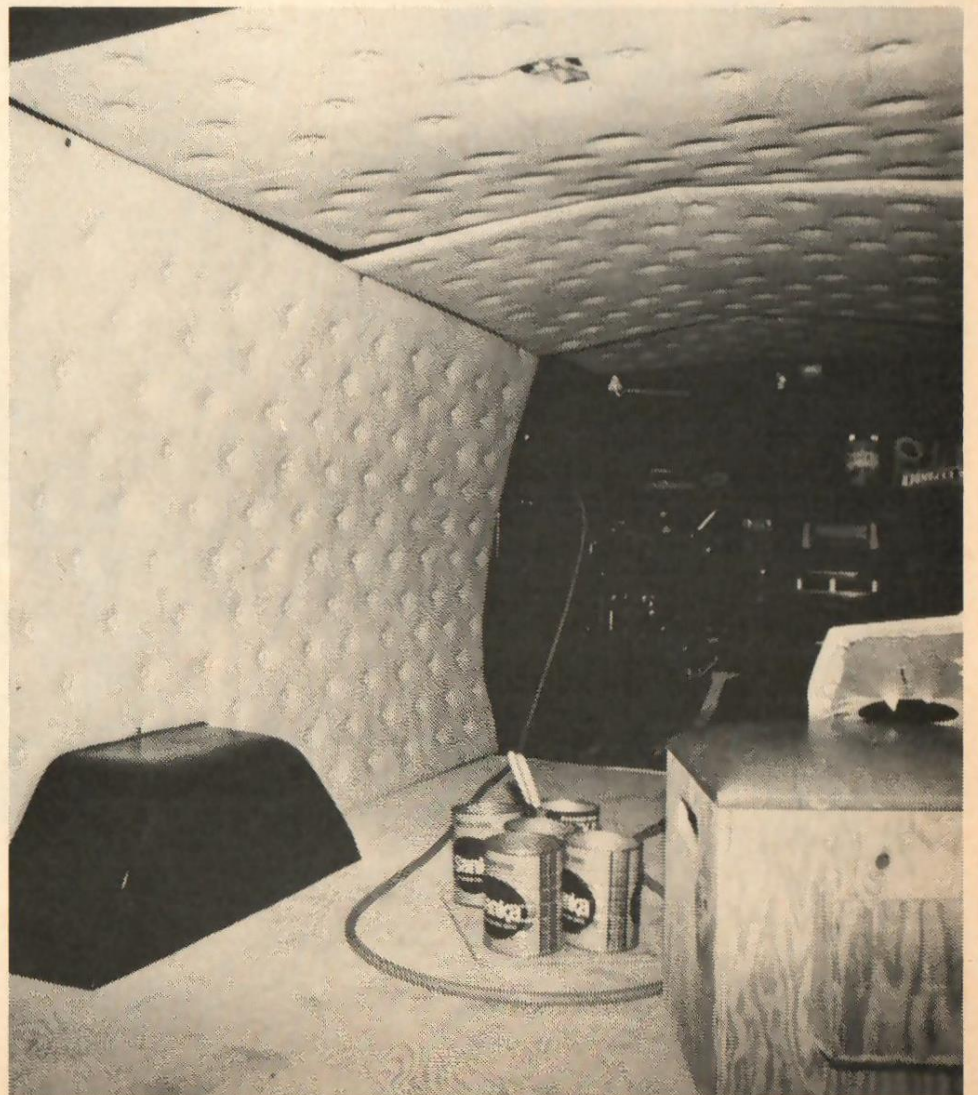
Star manufactures their own seats, so interiors are color keyed.



Ray Hare begins to detail a desert scene (insert) on a dealer van. Every van that leaves Star receives a one-of-a-kind mural by Ray.



Star has a special paint room where clear gloss is applied over the murals.



Star customizes to the customer's every desire. Here a full wall to ceiling button tufted design was ordered.

EQUIPMENT REPORT

Continued from page 26

if it's hooked up loosely, or you have an improper ground or an SWR of greater than 3:1, this lamp lets you know it. Sure, the old sets used to let you know also, by burning out your final amplifiers!

The meter is a delight to use also. It's so simply arranged that you won't have to guess any longer. The top half of the scale indicates "S" units when in receive, and the bottom half indicates relative transmit power. Nice . . . very nice!

The knobs for volume and squelch are equipped with raised reference marks so you don't have to look at them to know where they're set. You can actually tell by feel! And if you look at the concentric controls, you'll see that under the squelch control, there's a skirted knob marked microphone gain control. It's a mike pre-amp that gooses the power from the mike when you're talking in a quiet ambience. If things around you get a bit noisy, just crank 'er down and you'll have all the nice benefits of noise silencing.

But the thing we liked best of all was the noise blanker and automatic noise limiting circuits. With the car engine off, the rig was nice and quiet. Turn the engine on, however,

and you get all sorts of crackling and static. We flipped the ANL switch, and things quietened down a goodly bit. Flip the N.B. switch and it was the same as if we had turned off the ignition!

A CB is a CB is a CB. But it's the little things that count with us, and General Electric has taken care of almost all of them. Typical is the mounting bracket.

Now let's face facts, shall we? Nobody is going to buy a CB rig because it has a clever mounting bracket, right? So when a manufacturer goes so far as to provide a mounting bracket that makes your life easier, you know that he's thinking of you. and if G.E. went so far in designing a clever mounting bracket, you just know that the thought that went into the transceiver has to be something else as well, and you won't be too far wrong.

What's so hot about the mounting bracket? They've got a drilled and slotted bracket so that you know the holes you drilled in your dash for the old rig will sure fit the new one too. And the side arms that support the rig don't just have ordinary holes, they're slotted so you can just loosen the thumb screws and slide the rig right out.

If you're interested in the technical numbers good buddy, here they are,

and we liked them. The sensitivity of the receiver is better than 0.5 microvolts for 500 milliwatts audio output at the minimum squelch setting. The adjacent channel (spillover) selectivity is better than 55 decibels. The transmit function is no slouch either. The power output is a full four watts maximum at 13.8 volts DC power input. Modulation is capable of 100%, factory limit preset at better than 90% at 10 microvolts mike signal input.

You know, General Electric has more here than they figured on! We started to play with the rig, and discovered that if you put the handset cradle under the rig, it forms an excellent base for use in the home QTH. Tilts the front panel upwards at precisely the correct angle!

The more we play with this rig, the more we discover about it. We just started toying with the control on the handset cradle, and realized that in addition to the manual switch, there's an indicator that tells you which position the switch is in.

Of course, the acid test for any rig, is what it does on the air. It performs beautifully, no question about that. The signal reports were magnanimous, to say the least, and apparently the audio quality is super. Everybody seemed to like the sound, and we got nothing but raves. The big 3½ inch speaker gives you a living room audio quality that is hard to come by on most rigs.

But in all honesty, General Electric has a problem. When you ask somebody on the air what kind of equipment they're using, you can get a roster of all the brand names that you expect to hear. But when you say "My rig is a General Electric," they ask you to repeat, and then say "That's what I thought you said." It seems that while we know G.E. has been producing top-quality products in the electronic field for many, many years, they haven't as yet established a name in the CB field. For our own money, nobody deserves such a name more. We're sure helping to spread the word, for the only way we can see that G.E. could have improved this rig is to have gold-plated the front panel, and that wouldn't have made much of a difference anyway.

This is what is called, in the magazine business, a "rave review." No writer in his right mind is going to write such a review unless he really believes in the product, for such reviews can often backfire on you. Frankly, we're not the least bit worried about such backfiring, for this is without a doubt, one heck of a fine piece of equipment and we know that if you buy one yourself, you'll be as happy about it as we are!

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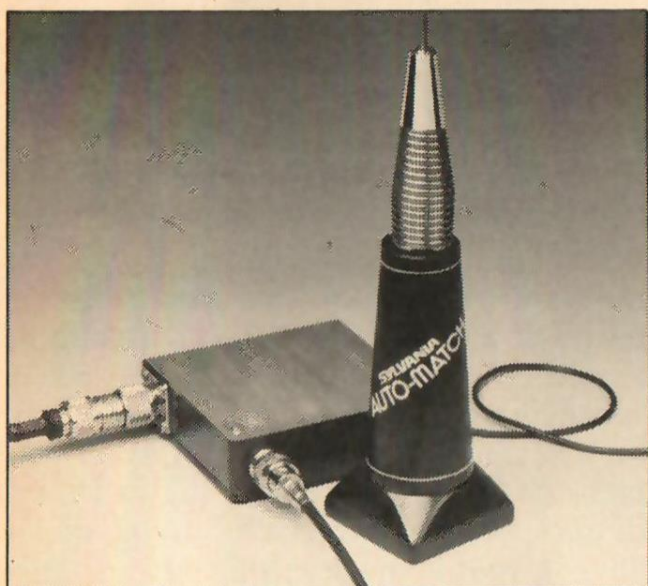
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Van Shop'n



GOT A MATCH?

This self-tuning Sylvania Auto-Match antenna, which significantly improves performance of both 23- and 40-channel CB transceivers, has been added to the line of CB accessories offered by the Distributor and Special Markets Division of GTE Sylvania Incorporated, a subsidiary of General Telephone & Electronics Corporation.

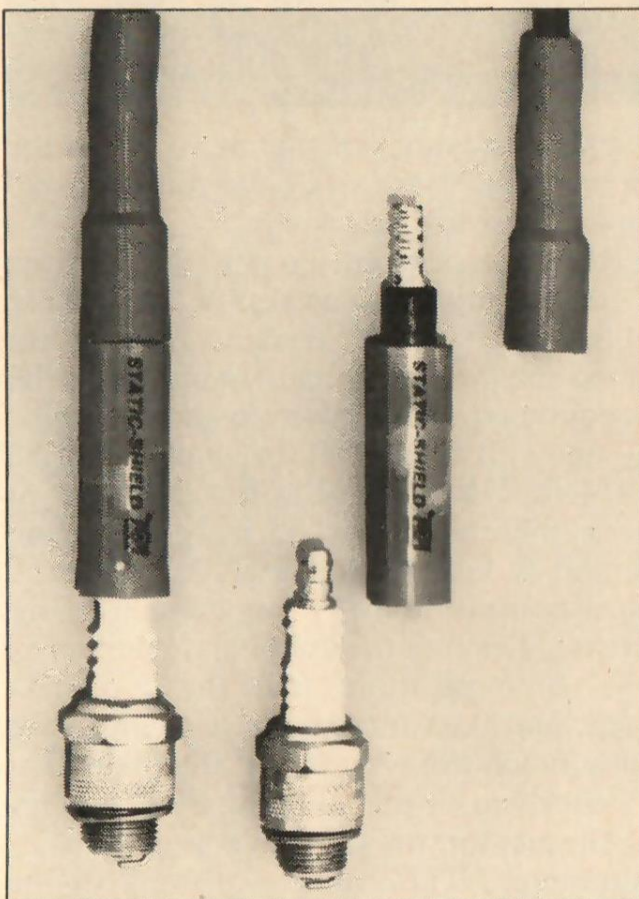
The Sylvania Auto-Match system measures the transmitted radio frequency signal at the antenna feed point and correctively tunes the antenna for maximum performance and minimum VSWR. The antenna automatically stays tuned as channels are changed, the whip sways, becomes wet, weathered, or as any condition is encountered that would ordinarily affect the performance of a conventional fixed-tuned antenna.

The non-corroding stainless steel antenna operates from the same power source as the CB transceiver.



'78 CHEVY VAN GRILLE

A chrome tube bolt-on steel grille is available for 1978 Chevy/GMC vans from Stull Industries, Inc. The show tube grille is 5/8-inch tube, triple plated for lasting quality. The simple bolt-on installation takes less than an hour, using existing factory hardware. For more information on this and many other tube grilles, and head light conversion kits, contact Stull Industries, Inc., Dept. CVM, 7306 Melrose Street, Buena Park, CA 90621, (714) 522-4083. Send \$1 for complete '78 catalog.



MOST COMMON CAUSE

Good news for FM and CB radio users bothered by frequent interference problems.

Static-Shields, a newly-developed system for screening out interference from its most common cause—spark plugs on gasoline engines—has been announced by Berry Research and Development, Inc.

Described as "advance technology emission suppression modules," Static-Shields are designed for "no-tools" installation between spark plugs and ignition cables on a wide variety of engines which can cause interference.

First marketing of Static-Shields will be through automotive departments of key K-Mart outlets in 25 metropolitan areas in 17 states.

With increased production, they will be marketed nationwide through a wider variety of outlets in the next few weeks. The price for a package of eight is expected to be about \$10.



PLASTIC POWER

A new space age multi urethane that is used in conjunction with low pressure injection molding is here, and Recmar Plastics has got it! It's called RP-47-11

and it makes for better and more beautiful automotive products.

Recmar has developed this super tough multi urethane ideal for flares, spoilers, sun visors and various other automotive accessories. The RP-47-11 program will also display a new style line of spoilers, flares and sun visors for vans and mini trucks.

RP-47-11 supercedes fiberglass because of greater temperature resistance, higher impact resistance and a superior finish that looks great by itself or can easily be painted.

For more information on RP-47-11, contact John Mixer, Recmar Plastics, Dept. CVM, 3307 West Castor Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92704.



LIFE SAVER TROUBLE LIGHTS

Easily as important as carrying a fire extinguisher, a hand held trouble light can be a miracle in a time of need. Great for engine trouble, tire changing, reading road signs, address spotting, anywhere you need light. T&H Van Works Unltd. offers these two inexpensive life saver lights that plug into any standard cigarette lighter receptacle. Both units have conveniently located thumb switches, and heavy duty sealed beam light source.

The Econolight, only \$7.95, features a 35,000 candle power beam mounted in a high impact resistant self handle casing. Ten-foot cord wraps around the handle when not in use. Built-in steel hanger gives additional ability in and out of use.

The "High" lite, only \$12.95, has a 50,000 candle power and comes with a removable motorcycle type hand grip. Handy mounting bracket is also available for \$2 extra.

You may never have as much need for any other R.V. accessory.

To order Trouble Lights or for 32-pg. Van Catalog (\$1), or 566 pg. R.V. Catalog (\$4), send to: T&H Van Works Unltd., 7833 Canoga Ave., Dept. CVM, Canoga Park, CA 91304.

Audio File

By Byron Wels

NOISE!!!!

Noise is the bane of the existence of the vanner who would like some quality audio on the road. Unfortunately the engine components in any van will, by their very action, generate sparks. Every generator and motor, the ignition points, the plugs, the distributor, all generate sparking that can be heard through the speakers as "hash" or "static." When the audio equipment is turned on and the engine is turned on, sometimes all you *can* hear is the noise. Getting rid of it requires that you play an electronic game of detective.

The van engine, located inside the front of the van, should be isolated. You can line the inside of the console with fine mesh copper screening, then connect the screening to a good chassis ground.

The noise can actually come into the system in two ways. It can be airborne, or it can come through the wiring.

A suitable filter, connected at the input to the audio amplifier, can eliminate the wire-conveyed noise. The noise coming through the air must be eliminated by additional brute-force filters connected at every possible noise-generating source.

The first shot, of course, is to install suppressor-type spark plugs or else install in-line resistor cables.

Always check out the noise level before and after making a corrective step, and in this way you can actually measure the good that you're doing. If your amplifier is equipped with a meter, begin by turning it on with the other equipment turned off—tape or FM/AM, for example, or tune these to a neutral place where no sound is heard. Now start the van and measure on the meter the amount of increase. Leaving the knobs and dials set in the same position, take the corrective step, and then measure once again to see how much noise you have eliminated.

After you've had at the spark plugs, try a suppressor on the van's generator or alternator. This connects directly to the unit at its terminal. Make sure the filter or suppressor is properly grounded, too.

Everything that is motor operated can be a source of trouble. However, before you go out and buy dozens of filters, consider that some of those motors are operated from the driver's seat. The heater, for example, can be a prime source of

noise, but you can check how much of the noise is coming from there simply by turning the heater on and off. The same goes for the air conditioner, the windshield wipers, and anything else that may be motor operated. If you *do* find a troublemaker, you can eliminate the trouble right there at the source.

Noise in an audio system is a real turn-off. Turn it off.

☆☆☆☆☆

AN OLD IDEA

TO MAKE NEW SOUNDS

When you talk about an audio system for the van, chances are that you think in terms of a cassette or 8-track, a suitable amplifier and a couple or three classy speakers complete with baffles that are all built in somewhere. However, the very dimensions of a van are such that a super-duper audio system such as you might have in your home, are somewhat limited in the van.

However, there are things that you can do to enhance the stereo in your van and give you a sound quality that will really freak out the populace. One thing that you might consider, is to use a set of stereo earphones instead of loudspeakers. Set up a coupling system and you can rig it so two sets of phones are available near the head of the bed. (Waddaya mean, you don't got a bed in the van?) The only problem with a set-up of this sort, is that you can't use the stereo phones while you're driving. Oh, you *can*, but if you happen to be entranced with what you're hearing so you don't hear the clod behind you leaning on his horn, the local fuzz might take a dim view of such activities. Keep the phones for the back of the van, and you won't get into trouble.

Another solution is to install the nicest, largest speakers you can get at the front end of the van, then a smaller set near the back doors. Near the audio control system, install a pair of L-pads.

You can get these from any good audio shop, along with info on how to hook 'em up. Now go back a few years, and find a nice stereo reverb unit. Connect the L-Pads to your amplifier speaker terminals, connect the main speakers to the L-pads directly, and then connect the smaller rear speakers, through the reverb system, to the other end of the L-pads.

Now watch what happens here.

You turn on the system, and get some good music playing. You'll hear it coming out through the main speakers. Now you perform the magic. You turn the L-pads up, and a portion of the music going to the main speakers is transmitted back to the rear speakers, through the pads. This part of the music also goes through the reverb, creating a delay in passage, so that (depending on how high the reverb has been set) you get a new depth and concert-hall echo effect. Sure, it's deliberately introduced distortion, but it's controlled distortion, and the sound has a liveness to it that makes an ordinary stereo system sound flat and meaningless.

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DIRTY OLD MEN / NEED LOVE TOO
IF IT FEELS GOOD DO IT
HAPPINESS IS BEING SINGLE
DO IT IN THE DIRT
TRY IT YOU'LL LIKE IT
LET'S BOOGIE
HONK IF YOUR HORNY
HAVE A NICE DAY
JUST PASSING THRU
AMERICA / LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT
HONOR IT / DEFEND IT
SUPPORT / YOUR POLICE
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
SAVE A TREE EAT A BEAVER
BEER DRINKERS / MAKE BETTER LOVERS
DIVERS DO IT DEEPER
SUPER STUD
BE KIND TO ANIMALS / KISS A FROG
MADE FROM JAP BEER CANS
DON'T FOLLOW ME I'M LOST
EVERY FIREMAN / LOVES A QUICKIE
HIT ME EASY / I'M FULL OF GAS
THINGS GO BETTER WITH WINE
BUDWEISER
COORS POWERED
I'D RATHER BE SURFING
I'D RATHER BE FISHING
I'D RATHER BE FLYING
I'D RATHER BE SAILING
I'D RATHER BE SKIING
I'D RATHER BE GOLFING
I'D RATHER BE DRAG RACING
HAPPINESS IS / PLAYING THE FIELD
FEMALES WANTED / INQUIRE WITHIN
WATCH MY REAR END / NOT HERS
KEEP ON CAMPING

KEEP ON JEEPIN'
KEEP ON BUGGIN'
KEEP ON TRUCKIN'
KEEP ON 4 WHEELIN'
Postal Workers / Do It with Zip
DO IT IN A DATSUN
TRY IT IN A TOYOTA
U.S.A. NO. 1 / STREET IS NEAT
LET'S PLAY / IN MY VAN
LET'S PLAY IN MY PORSCHE
PORSCHE
OFFICIAL / MAFIA STAFF CAR
U.S.A. / SKIER
U.S.A. / WATER SKIER
SKI BUNNY
THINK SNOW
SKIERS ARE BETTER LOVERS
SKIERS / GO DOWN FASTER
GOLFERS ARE BETTER LOVERS
DIVER / MUFF AND SCUBA
TENNIS IS MY RACKET
SMILE
LOVE
MY OTHER CAR / IS A PORSCHE
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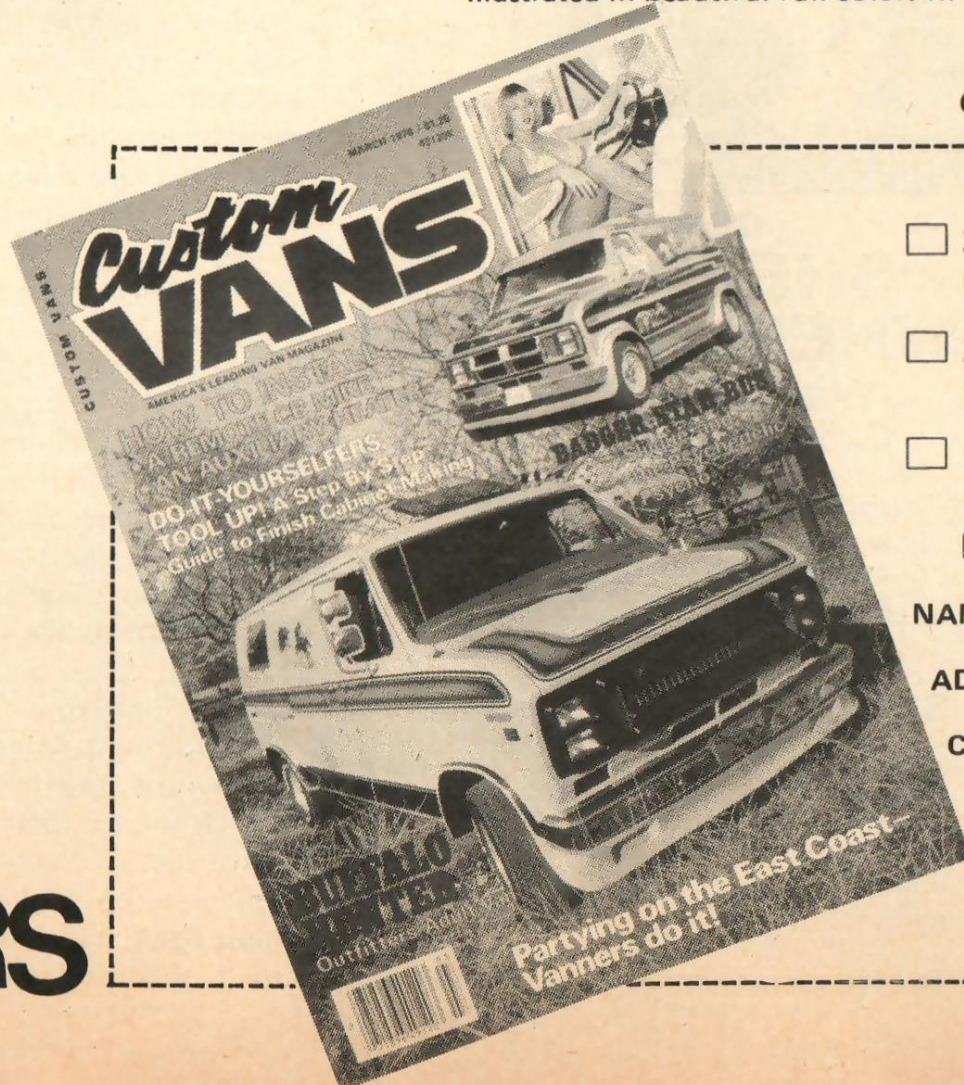
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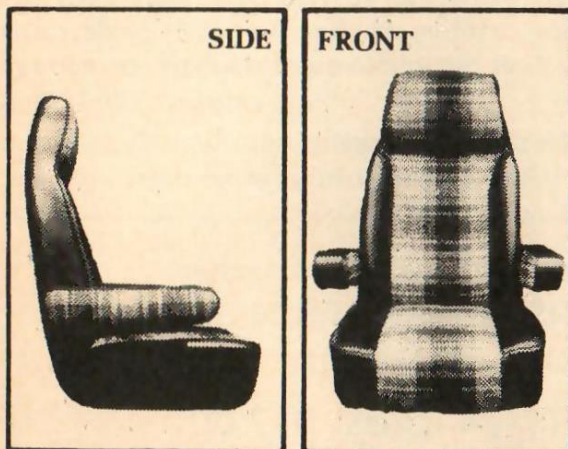
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Van Camp'n

By V. Lee Oertle

The time is right for dragging out last year's camping equipment and eyeballing it for a new season afield, even if the need for a spring checkup isn't always apparent. That is, until something happens to grab your attention with a sudden jolt. For example, leaving that tent lying on the floor of the garage all winter. It's disconcerting to toss it into the back of the van for the first spring trip, then find black widows crawling across the ceiling of the van! Yes, it has happened. Moral: Shake and ventilate tents and sleeping bags *well* before using again.

Other first-trip blues may soon follow, such as trying to light a balky camp lantern on the first fishing trip of spring. Or discovering that someone forgot a cabbage under the ice cubes in last year's put-away camp cooler. The usual cause: camping gear was put away too hastily last fall. *Now* you pay the *price*.

There's no need to shudder at mention of spiders. Insects just naturally like to

crawl into tents left standing in a dark corner of the garage. The key here is complete sealed *cover*. Before any tent was stored it should have been dropped into a large plastic bag (like a garbage-can liner, easily obtainable), and string-tied against insects and/or dust and moisture. To remedy the situation, I suggest the following procedures before starting off a new van-camping season.

VENTILATE!

A good *airing* is essential to rid tents, ice-chests and stoves of unpleasant accumulated odors. Tents should be unrolled on a clean surface (lawn or driveway) and carefully broomed out. Erect the tent on the lawn and examine it for insects (dead or alive) hanging in ceiling supports or between screens and windows. Bees, wasps, spiders, or anything crawly should be sprayed and swept out *now*. Let the tent stand several hours in the sun, then pack it away carefully again. As suggested earlier, enclose it in a big plastic bag and place it in a protected spot until trip-time. Lanterns and camp stoves should be vacuumed clean to remove all the dust and debris from burner ports. Remove the glass hood from the lantern, clean it, replace with a new mantle, and put it back together. The leather washer used on the pump-stem may need to be oiled to prevent drying up and losing pressure.

Discard any fuel left from last season. Don't try to save a few ounces of stove fuel. It's neither that expensive nor that difficult to obtain. More than likely it will contain traces of water or other impurities which can cause future trouble. Add clean fuel after draining and test the stove, lantern or heater for normal operation. Replacement parts are easy to obtain in your home town, but difficult to find in resort areas.

LOST AND MAYBE FOUND

Did you lose any camping gear last year? Hardware left in campgrounds nearly every day includes the following:

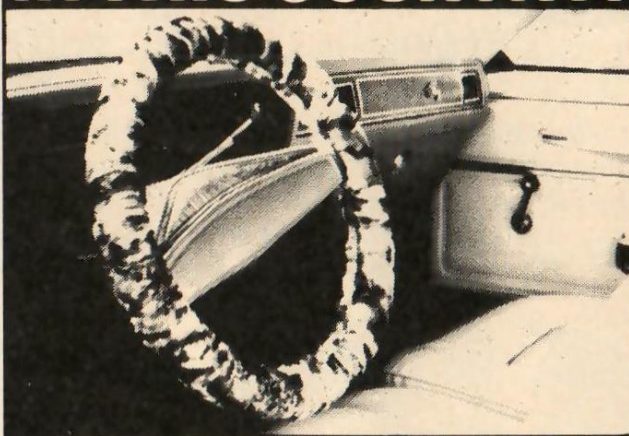
1. A few tent-stakes and pegs. Count them! Just *one* missing peg may let a tent blow down some stormy night. Campers leave them by the dozen.

2. Tent poles, particularly those used to support the front flap. This pole is often set aside and forgotten. Without it, the tent won't function properly.

3. Compact fuel-storage tanks lost off camp stoves. People leave them on camp tables, when packing, and forget to put them back into the box.

4. Covers for sleeping bags. Those nice

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draw-string bags are easily forgotten. Check yours now.

5. Roasting forks, cooking griddles, barbeque grilles. Is your cook kit complete?

6. Footwear. Many campers change from hiking boots to street shoes just before departing a campground, then drive away without them.

7. Another overlooked item is the tarp used over the rear or side door of a van for sun and rain protection. Because it is the last item to pack, vanners occasionally leave it behind.

8. *Clocks* are sometimes left on the camp table or in the grass where the tent stood.

Get the idea? Check off gear and replace missing items now. Cooking kits, guy-ropes, and all those little items which make camp life more convenient. Sleeping bags are perhaps the most valuable items of camping gear. They should be opened and aired out on clotheslines on a sunny day, vacuumed free of dust and insects, and inspected for damage. Torn covers should be repaired with patch-kits. Ripped seams should be re sewn and coated with water repellent. Jammed zippers should be lubed. If odors persist after this treatment, take them to the dry cleaners for a professional job. Once a year will suffice if the campers have been using washable inner liners as they *should*.

Folding tables and chairs should be inspected for bent hinges, loose or missing rivets, torn fabric, or bent frames. Repairs are easy to perform in your own garage, but perhaps not in the mountains in dark of night.

NEED SOMETHING NEW?

If you've attended any of the sport and vacation shows recently you saw a tremendous variety of new camping equipment for vans. Add-on rooms, rooftop sleepers, set-in dinette sections, bunk beds for inside and out, and a thousand and one highly useful ideas. Maybe it's time to take a hard look at last year's equipment. Is it still serviceable?

Perhaps your situation has changed. More passengers coming along this season? That means new sleeping bags, of which there is a greater choice these days. The new synthetic fibers are almost as good as down, but much less expensive. And if you're *really* interested in more camping vacations, like millions of others, why not take the ultimate step? Go look at the so-called "van camper inserts." You can buy a complete "insert kit" to quickly convert your van to a mini-camper home. Prices range from \$500 to \$2500 (and up) depending on the amount and quality of equipment. ●

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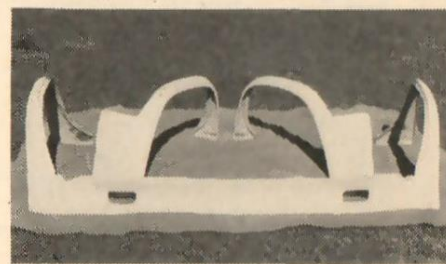
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Vanning

THE STATE OF THE ART

By Carl Caiati

ABS vs. FIBERGLASS

I doubt that there is a vanner who has not indulged himself or herself in some form of accessory purchase. Let's face it; what would the state of the art be without accessories, both decorative as well as functional? Accessories are fabricated out of many materials; usually in materials best suited for their application and purposes. In many respects, the formulas and applications work; but, sometimes a manufacturer will cut corners to make a buck, thus not always producing an unapplicable product, but one which will not be ideally suited. Which brings me to my commentary this month.

Two common materials used extensively for accessories are ABS and fiberglass. The particular accessories comprised of one or both of these materials are: spoilers, flares, overhead consoles, wings and airfoils, snack trays, window shades, air scoops, sinks and wet bar consoles. I'm sure this doesn't cover the entire accessory realm as new products hit the scene every day.

Practically all of you are familiar with glass fiber reinforced plastic (fiberglass); it's been around longer than vanning. Fiberglass components are commonly seen as flares, spoilers, running boards, consoles, etc. The flexibility of fiberglass, its versatility, as well as its durability, make it an optimum material for just about anything. In production, fiberglass is produced by mixing a resin with a chemical catalyst which enables the resin to harden through chemical reaction. To achieve the part shapes and contours, fiberglass must be formed in molds. These negative molds are made by casting them off a prototype model or sculpture. Once the production mold is finalized, an infinite number of parts may be manufactured from this master mold.

The procedure is simple in essence, but tedious and time consuming in application. First, a gel coat is sprayed onto the mold. This gel coat is what gives the finished fiberglass component its smooth, flaw-free surface. After the gel coat, a chopper gun is used to blow in a heavy coating of resin usually heavily impregnated with fiberglass particles.

Another method involves the hand lay-up of fiberglass woven cloth, to build in strength and durability. The last method is considered by most to be the best but is more costly in terms of time and labor, which on the bottom line adds up to extra cost. The hand lay-up may be the best, but both are more than adequate

when utilized for such parts as flares, running boards, visors, overhead consoles, spoilers and wings. In applicable cases where the part may be structurally weak, steel bracing may be laminated or imbedded between the fiberglass sheeting buildup (especially easy in hand lay-up) to firm up the component. A step not feasible with ABS, which uses a vacuum forming technique as opposed to molding. Fiberglass parts are most popular and a great all-around material, particularly if the parts are of good quality and craftsmanship.



This is a standard ABS flare. It looks good but does not possess the rigidity of fiberglass. Though ABS is excellent for some of the applications described in this text, I don't like it for flares and spoilers.



This is an example of how flexible ABS is. Manufacturers try to imply that this flexing characteristic is ideal, but for flares not so, as indicated in this treatise. Paint will tend to crack and peel off ABS if the plastic is not prepped and prepared properly.

A very good example in the van field is the fiberglass produced by Imaginary Glass. Their spoilers, flares, sun visors and other accessory items are first rate and flawless; no bubbly, pitted surfaces, plenty of glass cloth interwoven in the resin for rigidity and clean parting and cut lines. One must use some care in selecting fiberglass components. Stay away from the cheapie parts as you save little. Some are skimpily and stintingly produced and are too thin or weak. Beware of rip-off second rate items. These are usually parts which have been "lifted" from existing

bona fide manufacturers. The rip-off mad-for-bucks artists (who usually fall by the wayside after they have made their bucks and flooded the market with junk), take quality parts from reputable manufacturers and make molds from them, which are then used to produce what I consider to be poor seconds. The original quality producer has put all his time and expertise into making good prototypes, while the rip-off cares little about both research or quality. The unwary customer consequently buys an inferior product due to inherent fluctuations in size, fit, etc., which manifest themselves in the rip-off "second" since it does not come from the original, refined mold of the bona fide producer. If you consider fiberglass, stick with a brand name.

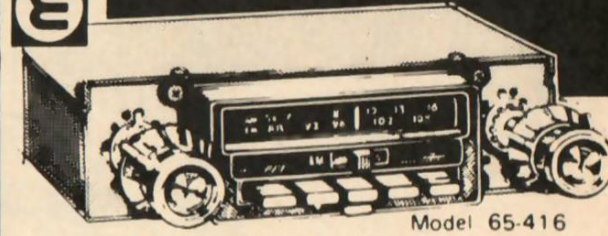
Our second most popular base medium for accessories is ABS plastic. ABS (Acrylic, Butyl, Styrene) is a popular plastic for mass producing components. Whereas fiberglass components are formed in a mold, ABS components are vacuum formed with the aid of heat and air. In ABS, a mold is also usually made in the shape of the finalized part formed and permanently secured to a flat base. The master mold is a solid molded and sculptured shell which is perforated with tiny air passage holes. The mold is fitted air tight onto a suction compartment of a vacuum forming machine, which also has an oven section built into its uppermost portion. To form a part or component, a

sheet of ABS plastic sized to accomodate and cover the mold is heated in the oven section of the vacuum forming machine, held and clamped by a movable frame. As the heat reaches the right temperature the ABS softens and becomes pliable. It is quickly pulled down mechanically by the frame over the mold. In the same instant, an integrated suction device sucks air through the mold's perforations, drawing the pliable plastic sheet snugly over or into the mold to achieve its shape and contour. The ABS is then allowed to cool, after which it reverts to its original rigidity but in a newly shaped state. In virtually all cases, trimming of excess material takes place.

ABS is excellent when properly applied. I have seen some jaded application of this material on vans. A particular area in question is the spoiler-flare segment. ABS in no way compares to fiberglass for flares and spoilers. First of all, it is too flimsy; too much inherent flexing. If molding-in is your bag, Bondo will not adhere to ABS as well as fiberglass, and it doesn't sand or fill with glazing putty as well. You must use extreme care when you drill, perforate or tighten screws or bolts against it. It cracks easily and the damaged parts don't glue and stay together well. When fiberglass flares and spoilers are not unreasonably damaged they can be easily patched and mended, even to the point where the patch is unde-

Continued on page 78

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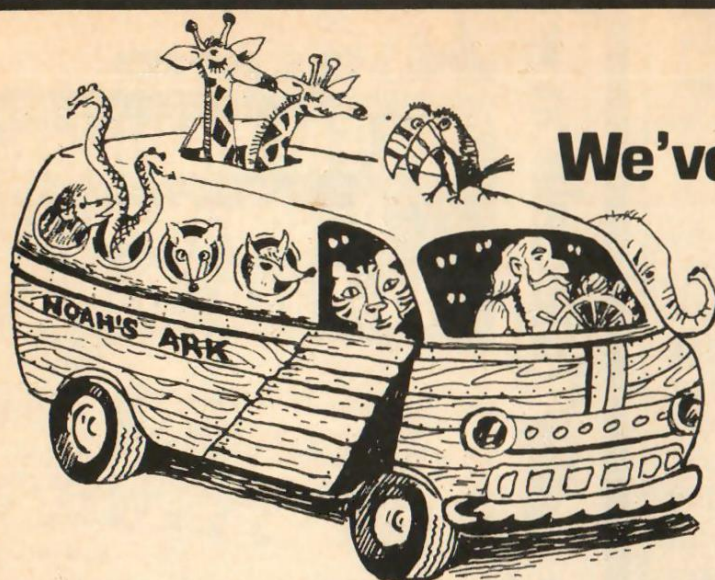
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VANNING

Continued from page 77

tectable. A little resin and glass cloth, a little filling in and fine finishing and the blemish disappears. Another negative factor with ABS flares and spoilers: poor wind resistance. At high speeds, the flexible ABS quivers and vibrates like mad; much more than fiberglass. This can cause the pieces to dislodge, break off or crack at the stress points (bolts, screws, etc.). Since ABS production is quick and the plastic material is relatively inexpensive compared to fiberglass, ABS flares and spoilers are far cheaper to produce. However, savings are not passed onto the consumer; only the inherent shortcomings of the material in this specific application. Though they may be cheaper, they are also inferior. On the positive side, there are many sound applications for ABS. A number of accessory plastic manufacturers are marketing shades and rear window covers of vacuum formed ABS. A&E rear louvers for example, are ideal vacuum formed pieces. PVT Plastics' Trekk shades are not only aesthetically well conceived, but exceedingly strong and sturdy. In fact, most production pieces along these lines leave little to be desired. They are basically all good, exemplifying the proper application of ABS. Snack trays are another area conducive to ABS formulation. The snack tray offerings I've seen incorporate attractiveness as well as rigidity, and are economical to boot. ABS clear windows and ports are all good, though not as desirable or sophisticated as the aluminum framed types. ABS works well for scoops and louvers too; many good ones are around.

In summary, we cannot say one medium is better than the other when comparing ABS and fiberglass. We can conclude though, that in some instances one or the other is more suited in application. For rigidity, ease of repair, structural sturdiness, fiberglass is hard to beat. For spoilers, flares, running boards, sun visors, etc., it's the only way to go unless you choose steel and the home-brew approach, which is not for the majority.

ABS and vacuum forming is better suited for sun scoops, shades, louvers, and snack trays, and I'm sure more applications will be discovered . . . for both materials.

Editor's Note: ABS plastic should not be confused with polyurethane, also used in the manufacture of spoilers and flares. A product evaluation on poly accessories was printed in the Feb.'78 issue of CVM.



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A big thanks in advance . . . DENNIS ADLER, Managing Editor, Custom Vans Magazine, P.O. Box 2547, Chatsworth, California 91311.

1. Sex: Male _____ Female _____
2. Age: _____
3. Marital Status: Married _____ Single _____
Divorced _____ Widowed _____ Other _____
4. Occupation: Professional _____ Management _____
Sales _____ Technical _____ Clerical _____
Student _____ Own Business _____ Other _____
5. Approximate Income: \$ _____ per year
6. Education Completed: _____
7. Do you own a van? Yes _____ No _____
8. 2WD _____ 4WD _____
9. Type of Van: Dodge _____ Ford _____ Chevy _____
GMC _____ Other _____

10. Is your van customized? Yes _____ No _____
11. If customized, check one of the following: Customized by owner _____ Conversion Shop _____ Purchased already customized _____

12. Check items in your van:

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| Mag Wheels | _____ | _____ |
| Tape Player | _____ | _____ |
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13. Approximate value of your van:
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\$10,000 to \$12,000 _____
\$12,000 and above _____
14. Have you modified your engine? Yes _____ No _____
15. Do you attend Van-ins? Yes _____ No _____
16. Local _____
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17. What do you like most about Van-ins? (PICK ONLY ONE)
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20. How do you use your van? Business _____
Pleasure _____ Custom Shows _____ Other _____

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A: Always U: Usually S: Sometimes R: Rarely N: Never

21. My work is satisfying to me A _ U _ S _ R _ N _
22. I am interested in my work A _ U _ S _ R _ N _
23. My work is unpleasant A _ U _ S _ R _ N _
24. I am enthusiastic about my work A _ U _ S _ R _ N _
25. My work is boring A _ U _ S _ R _ N _

Please check the letter after each statement which best indicates how you feel about things in general.

A: Agree D: Disagree DK: Don't Know

26. In the past people always knew what was expected of them. A _ D _ DK _
27. The things our parents valued are still important today. A _ D _ DK _
28. Very few people have deep beliefs in the important things. A _ D _ DK _
29. The way things are today, it is hard for people to form lasting friendships. A _ D _ DK _
30. Even though things are changing today, people always know the right way to act. A _ D _ DK _
31. What kind of articles do you like best? (Pick one)
Features on custom vans _____
How-to-do-its _____
Product Evaluations _____
Vanning events _____
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Vanmaker

By Bill Farah

DRIVERS BE SEATED

The first prerequisite to being the pilot of that space age vehicle, that has the "shiny" wheels and pipes and luminescent tape strung from windshield to tail-lights, is to sit down. Too many times a person will buy a set of seats for his or her van because of their appearance, rather than for comfort or durability. It is my intention in this article, to explain the construction of a van seat and to steer you in the right direction.

Starting from the bottom, literally, the first thing to look for is a good pedestal. There are three types: Cam-lock, nylon bearing, and ball bearing. The cam-lock is a combination of two pipes, one inside the other with a cam apparatus that tightens one pipe against the other. Usually the pipes are 3½- and 4-inch diameters and do sway considerably. Also, if the pedestal is inverted as might happen in an accident, the pipes can come apart. The nylon bearing pedestal is built on a much larger diameter pipe and has a single pin-

lock in the forward position. It is much stronger than the cam-lock but does have a drawback. The nylon pads used as bearings have a tendency to wear out faster than the seat and have to be replaced during the life of the seat. The third type is the ball bearing pedestal, which has construction similar to the nylon pedestal but steel ball bearings are used in place of the nylon pads. This pedestal is both sturdy and dependable for the life of the seat.

The next thing to look for is the seat frame construction. Many seat frames are built out of steel pipe that is thin-walled, and can be easily bent to contour the body. The metal gauge is similar to electrical conduit. These seats will look beautiful but will not support your weight for long. A seat should be made of heavy gauge tubular steel and have separate straps welded from back to bottom. This stops the flex that is found in most seats that are built out of light gauge steel.

Almost all of the major seat manufacturers are now switching to spring-grid seats. These seats are built with a spring-steel grid welded into the bottom of them. This spring-grid should be welded to the frame under tension. That is to say that the grid should be bent or bowed slightly toward the top of the cushion. This is where the spring action comes from, so check for this. Some seats you will find have the grid welded in flat. Stay away from these because they defeat the purpose of the spring.

The next thing to look for is the fabrics used in building the seat. All cloth fabrics should be 100% nylon and Scotch-garded, while the vinyl should be of high quality and not the type that you can rub the ink off with soap and water. The sewing is important. If the vinyl is stitched too close together, then it will perforate and separate readily. If the thread is not nylon, then it will have a tendency to deteriorate under the sun's rays and changes in temperature and humidity.

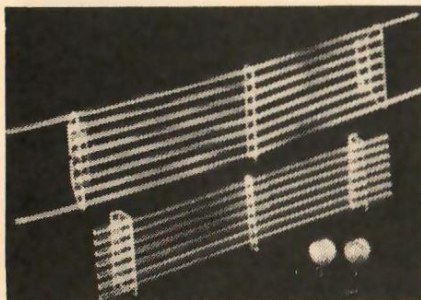
Finally, pick a seat that is going to be comfortable. If it is too straight up and down, you will fall off the front; if it reclines too much, it might feel comfortable, but you will always be reaching toward the wheel. On a long trip, this will really give you a backache. Find the happy medium. Make sure the seat has a good lumbar support for your lower back, and drivers be seated!

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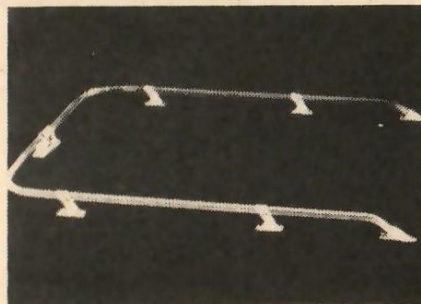
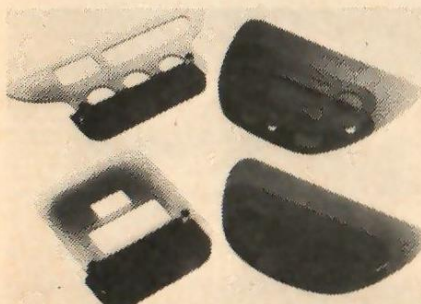


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Van Tracks

April 28, 29, 30

Night Flight Vans, Houston, Texas, presents their first annual truck-in Beach Boogie '78 (Splashdown) at Galveston, Texas. Contact Harold L. Gary, President, at 782-7957; or Shelly Wooldridge, Secretary, at 729-4524.

April 28, 29, 30

Blue Water Vans hosts 1st Virginia Van Nationals at Twin Oaks Campground in Toano near Williamsburg, Virginia. Live band Friday and Saturday night. Pre-registration fee is \$15 per van—\$20 at the gate. *Vans Only*. For info and pre-registration forms write: Blue Water Vans, P.O. Box 7443, Hampton, VA 23666.

April 29

The Truckin' Together Van Club will hold a Road Rally over some of the prettiest back country in East-Central Illinois. Contact Truckin' Together Van Club, Box 236, Hoopston, Illinois 60942, or phone (217) 283-7808.

May 5-7

Volkswagen Street Van Association presents the 1st Annual Hill Country Run. This event is limited to Volkswagen vans only! Pre-entry \$10. Trophies and dash plaques will be awarded. Write: V.S.V.A., P.O. Box 14354, San Antonio, Texas 78214, (512) 333-3917, or (512) 923-5608.

May 5, 6, 7

Visalia Vanboree. Live bands, cafeteria, trophies, clean restrooms, van show, raffle and more. Proceeds to charity. Pre-entry \$10. Deadline April 15, 1978. Contact Visalia Vans, P.O. Box 3862, Visalia, California 93277.

May 5, 6, 7

St. Louis Truckin' Assoc. presents the 6th Annual Mini-Truck-In. Family events, live entertainment and disco, Show 'N Shine, full facilities. Pre-registration deadline April 27th, 1978. \$13 per van (2 adults and children under 17), \$25 at the gate. Only 700 vans can enter. No guaranteed gate entry, so pre-register. Vans only. Contact: St. Louis Truckin' Assoc., P.O. Box 28829, St. Louis, Missouri 63123.

May 12, 13, 14

The Vanditos of NW Indiana present the 2nd Annual Truck-In at Lake Eliza Resort, Valparaiso, Indiana. Pre-registration \$11, \$14 at gate. For info

write: Phil Meyers, 2605 E. 141st, East Chicago, Indiana 46312.

May 19, 20, 21

North Fork Vans presents Truck-On-In '78 at Legend Valley Campground. Pre-entry only, 1000 van limit. Contact: North Fork Vans, P.O. Box 2161, Heath, Ohio 43055.

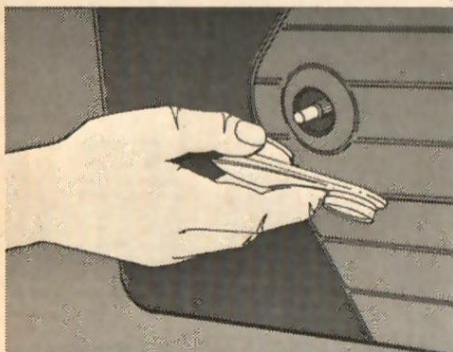
May 20-21

Vancrafters Van Fair, Des Moines County Fairgrounds, West Burlington, Iowa. Van show with trophies. First 60 vans will be under roof. Electricity available. Pre-entries to Van Crafters Van Fair, P.O. Box 1054, Burlington, Iowa 52601.

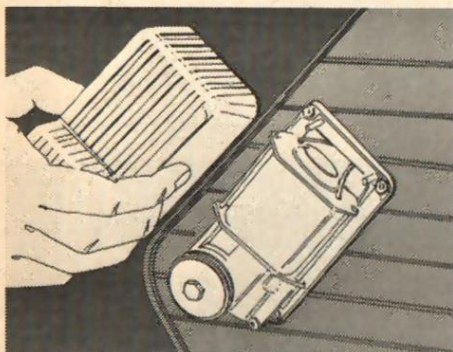
May 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

Fourth International Van Fest, Expo-land, Fisherville, Virginia, four miles off I-81 on I-64E. Room for 10,000 vans. Indoor and outdoor games, contests and top entertainment. Plenty of restrooms and hot showers (even more built since '77). Nearby stores and many supplies sold on the grounds. Show 'N Shine, Vankana, new and different activities plus the regular favorites. Still only \$15 for pre-registered van with two people, plus \$10 each additional person. Gate registration is \$25, plus \$15 each additional. For pre-registration forms, contact: Van Fest, 2628 Walnut St., Harrisburg, PA 17103, (717) 233-5848.

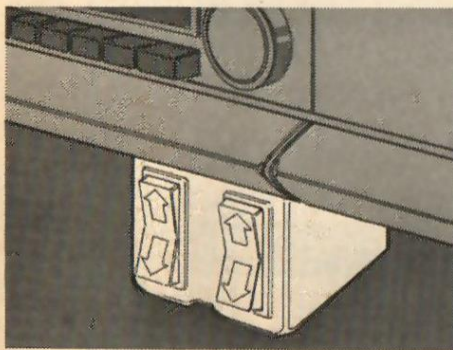
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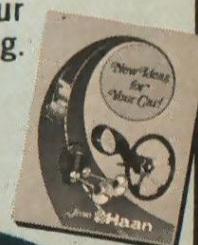
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Cycle Re-Cycle	78
Disco Vans	16
Douglas Supertop	9
Ducoh Systems	13
Leslie Edelman	77
Denny Elwell	4
Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.	42, 43
Frigiking	Cvr2
General Electric	29
Glass Specialty System	70
Great Plains Industries	10
Vilem B. Haan, Inc.	81
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S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.	49
Koolatron Industries	15
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N.R.I. Schools	5
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Nortex Corp.	4
P.V.T. Plastics	17
Puuka Seat Company	74
Serpent Accessories	80
Sheepskin Products	74
Solar Screen of Mich.	76
Strand Art Company	72
Sundial Marketing	8
T&H Van Works	12
Truck & Van Accessories	78
West Coast Knots	9
Whole Earth Vans	18
Wolfye Van Accessories, Inc.	78

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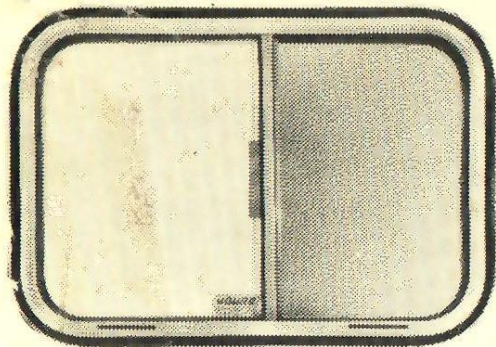
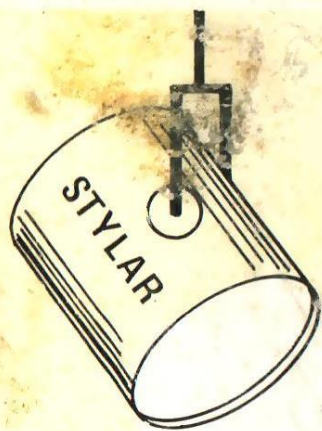
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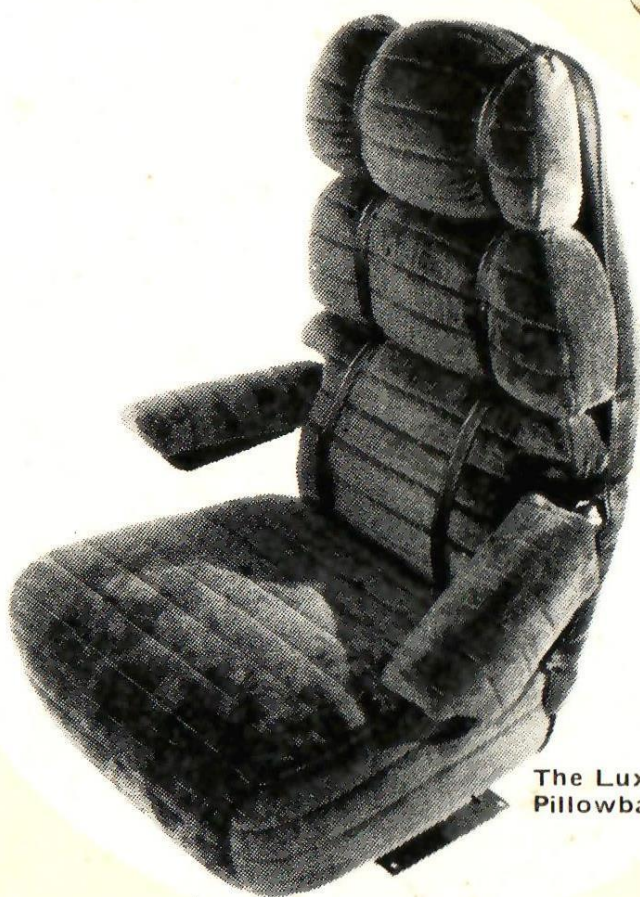
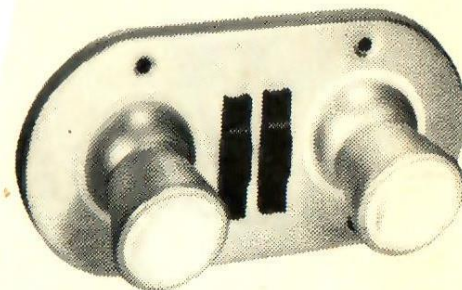
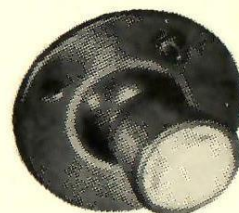
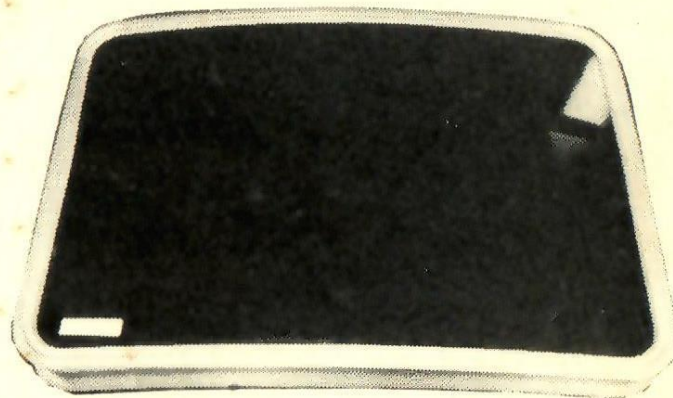
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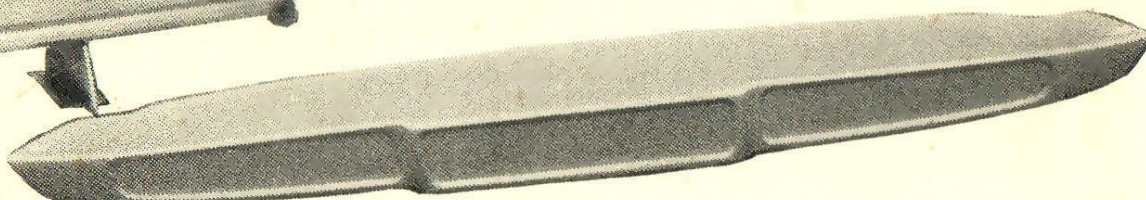
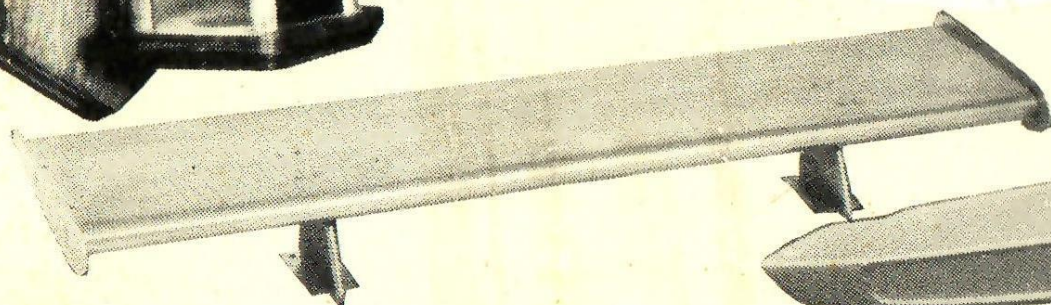
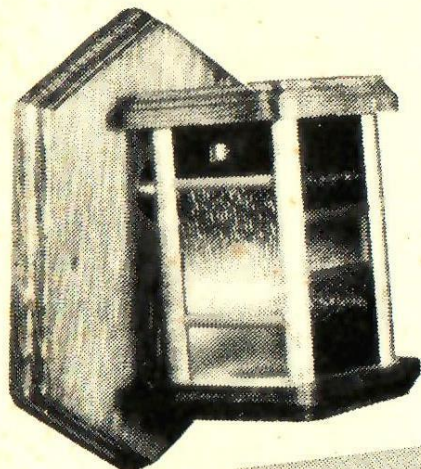
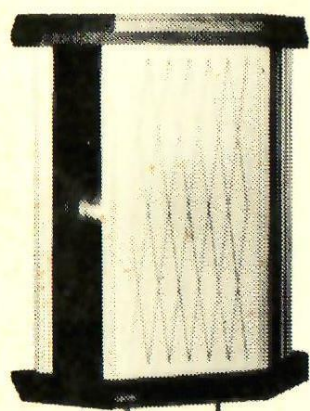
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